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THE CHRISTIAN AT MASS

BY

REV. JOSEPH L. ANDREIS.

This book lifts the veil that covers infinite treasures from the sight of the Christian.

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PREFACE.

"*The Christian at Mass*" might be very simply prefixed with the old proverb,—"a friend in need is a friend indeed."

And this proverb would both in the manner and matter express what the writer of this little book wants it to be,—a very honest and direct "friend." It was written in the intervals of unceasing work by a pastor for his flock. It makes clear the meaning of the Mass in all its parts. It points directly to the centre of the Sacrifice,—the Passion and Death of its High Priest and Victim, Jesus Christ. It leaves nothing unexplained; it speaks for itself; and the writer is willing to let it so speak. Merely quoting the words of one who has carefully read the MS.,—"'*The Christian at Mass*' lifts the veil that covers infinite treasures from the sight of the Christian; it will not only make the reader more pious, but more intelligently pious."

PARTS OF THE MASS. ✝ ALLEGORICAL MEANING.

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INTRODUCTION.

Dear Christian Reader:

The preparation of the following Instructions and their presentation to the public, are mostly due to one, whose earnest suggestion was a command. It was that I should explain the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

This task was, therefore, undertaken with the intent of aiding the Christian to assist at Mass with the spirit for which it was instituted by our Blessed Lord, Jesus Christ. "*The Christian at Mass*" will, then, enable you to relish and profit more by the Mass, with, or without, the prayer-book.

This little volume consists of a series of Instructions on the allegorical meanings of the principal parts of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass—all bearing on the Passion and Death of Its High Priest and Victim—Jesus Christ,—on the subsequent mysteries of Redemption,—on the precious fruits of the Mass,—on the

practical manner of hearing it, and, as an appendix, on the Mass for the dead, said in black vestments.

The result from its perusal will be to have your mind and heart riveted on the scene enacted on Calvary,—on the mysteries that followed, as mystically reproduced on the Altar. You will, thereby, be aided to harvest from the Mass an abundance of its immense riches.

All the good that may be done by the perusing of these pages, is by the writer offered to the honor and glory of God, and of His Son—our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. Joseph L. Andreis.

Baltimore, Maryland, 1895.

THE CHRISTIAN AT MASS.

FIRST INSTRUCTION.

WHEN he leaves his house, to be present at the offering of the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, the Christian shows that he is aware of St. Paul's saying: "We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come;"[1] that faith teaches him that God has made him for heaven, his only lasting home; and that he remembers the words of Christ spoken after His last supper: "In My Father's house there are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you."[2]

He also shows he believes that by the offering of Masses and other suffrages for souls in Purgatory, he intends to hasten their entrance into the place he craves for himself—heaven. Whenever he thinks

[1] Hebr., XIII, 14. [2] St. John, XIV, 2.

of, or celebrates the feast of All Saints, he is irresistibly forced to ask himself: "Shall I also be of their number? Shall I also stand with them before the throne of God and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and holding a palm in my hands? Shall I join them in singing praises to God, and to the Lamb? Shall I also be led to drink at the fountains of the waters of life, and have God wipe away all tears from my eyes?" The Angel of Faith whispers, that just as he now passes from his house to the house of worship, so will he pass from the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant; and just as he now comes before the Altar whereon the Divine Lamb is slain anew for his redemption, so will he go before the throne of His glory in heaven. It is to realize these longings that the Christian comes before the Altar, and follows step by step the Divine Victim Who offers Himself in sacrifice as on Mount Calvary through the ministry of the Priest empowered by Him. The Christian believes that this Divine Victim is the Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, who is *morally* present in His Priest personating Him; the Christian also firmly believes that Jesus Christ is *physically* present in that

which the Priest offers; and, therefore He, by means of the Priest, as His intelligent instrument, offers sacrifice, and in that sacrifice He is Himself the Victim. Hence, by assisting at Mass, the Christian adores Him, thanks Him, supplicates Him for the grant of the graces necessary to fidelity, of pardon for infidelities, and of mercy to supersede the too-well-deserved rigor of justice.

With his soul thus predisposed, and his body reverently postured, the Christian beholds the Priest in his sacerdotal vestments and with a veiled chalice in his hands, advancing with grave composure from the *Sacristy* to the *Sanctuary*, and he piously imagines he sees the Lord Jesus Christ just coming from His last supper-chamber, Who, in company with only three of His Apostles, namely, Peter, James and John, directs His divine steps to the country place called Gethsemani. The place whereon the Priest puts the veiled chalice reminds the Christian of the lonely spot in Gethsemani, which Jesus selected to prepare for His sacrifice. When the Priest goes to the Epistle side and opens the book called the Missal, the Christian thinks of Judas Iscariot on his way to the high priest and the princes

of the Jews, to open his mind to them concerning his vile plan of delivering his Divine Master into their hands.

In the descending of the Priest from the Altar to its lowest step, the Christian sees Christ, Who, being conscious of the dark doings of His faithless disciple, "begins to fear and feel sorrowful;"[1] bids His three Apostles "watch and pray that they may not enter into temptation;"[2] and, "withdrawing away a stone's throw from them, He Himself kneels down to pray."[3] The Christian is struck by the carefully chosen wording used by St. Luke in qualifying as a withdrawal the leaving of Jesus from His company, and sees its meaning, namely: that in the condition of great sadness from which He was suffering, His natural inclination prompted Him to remain with His friends; but, following the counsel of His own spirit, He tore Himself away from them in order to be alone with His Heavenly Father, and thus seek comfort and consolation in Him instead of in men. With this example before his eyes, the Christian learns that in his afflictions he must not put his chief

[1] St. Mark, XIV, 33.
[2] St. Matthew, XXVI, 38.
[3] St. Luke, XXII, 41.

hope of consolation in man, nor immoderately seek after earthly satisfactions; but first, as St. James says, crave at God's hands, and expect them from Him,[1] after the example of the prophet David, who said: "My soul refused to be comforted; I remembered God, and was delighted."[2]

When the Priest at the foot of the Altar begins the Mass by making the sign of the cross on himself and reciting the 42d Psalm, the Christian imagines he sees the terrible scene of sufferings and death on the cross as it was present to the mind of Christ, and perceives how terribly it affected Him, since it so overcame Him as to cause Him to "fall flat on the ground,"[3] and suffer such great agony as to sweat blood so that its "drops were trickling down upon the ground."[4] At this juncture the Christian is informed by St. Luke that, "being in agony, Christ prayed the longer;"[5] and is told by St. Matthew that Christ's prayer was: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."[6]

[1] v. 13.
[2] Ps. LXXVI, 4.
[3] St. Mark, XIV, 35.
[4] St. Luke, XXII, 44.
[5] XXII, 43.
[6] XXVI, 39.

It is when the Priest profoundly inclines to recite the Confiteor, that the Christian pictures to himself the agonizing Jesus expostulating with His Eternal Father, and apprehends in that prayer the intense combat between His inferior will and His superior will—the will of the flesh and the will of the spirit. The inferior will, the will of the flesh, refused to suffer and meet the ignominious death of the cross, because of the natural repugnance to suffer and die, and because it seemed vain that He should submit to His Passion for the sake of people who had persistently resisted Him, persecuted Him, and were now seeking His destruction; nay, even for the sake of His very disciples, for they had forsaken Him. But His superior will, the will of His spirit, which constantly was subject to the will of His Eternal Father, as He Himself had formerly declared, saying: "I do always the things that please Him,"[1] demanded the surrender of His inferior will: "not as I will, but as thou wilt." The redemption and salvation of mankind had to be accomplished through His Passion and death; hence, with His superior will, Jesus said to His Heavenly Father:

[1] St. John, VIII, 29.

"as thou wilt that I should suffer and die for the redemption and salvation of all men, so I also will it."

Concerning the prayer which Christ repeated for the third time, namely: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," the Christian bears in mind the explanations which St. Ambrose and St. Catherine of Siena offer as received through special revelation from Christ Himself, namely: 1st. That by that prayer Christ manifested Himself exceedingly anxious to drink the chalice of His Passion and Death, that He might show His intense love for His Father, and redeem all men; that He was therefore so longing for the moment to accomplish this great work, that He must have said: "My Father, my desire to suffer and die is so intense that any delay, even of an hour, nay, of a minute, is agonizing; let then this chalice pass by my drinking the whole of its bitter contents, that I may thus conquer death and at once return to Thee." In fact He had expressed this desire on former occasions; for instance, when He said: "I have a baptism, wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I strait-

ened until it be accomplished?"[1] Again, when immediately before His Passion, He said: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you."[2] The explanation given by St. Catherine of Siena is that, foreseeing that many would be ungrateful to His Passion, remain in sin, and be eternally lost, Christ felt greatly grieved, and called this grief a chalice. Hence His expostulation with His Heavenly Father: "Let this chalice pass from me," as if He had said: "Take away this great grief from me; prevent so many men from being lost, and grant that all may be saved." The Christian knows that had Christ earnestly asked this, it would have been granted Him, for the Father would not refuse His Son; but Christ would rather conform to the will and justice of His Father, and hence He said: "Not my will, but thine be done."[3]

THE PRIEST ASCENDS THE ALTAR STEPS.

In him, the Christian views Christ, Who of His own free will delivers Himself up into the hands of His enemies, to work out their redemption and that

[1] St. Luke, XII, 50. [2] *Ibid.*, XXII, 15. [3] *Ibid.*, XXII, 42.

of all men; in fact, said He to His three Apostles: "Rise, let us go."[1] The avowed anxiety of Christ to suffer and die for the salvation of man is then expressed by the Priest, who, while ascending the Altar steps, says a prayer entreating God to show all men His infinite mercy by granting to them pardon for their sins, pity for their frailty, and the grace to attain life everlasting.

SECOND INSTRUCTION.

Last Sunday we considered what the Christian means by leaving his house to come to Church and assist at the offering of the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass; what the Priest, in his sacerdotal vestments and holding a veiled chalice in his hands, coming from the Sacristy to the Sanctuary, represents. We spoke of the meaning conveyed by the placing of the veiled chalice on the Altar, and of the Priest's passing to the Epistle side to open the Missal. We took special notice of his descending from the Altar

[1] St. Matthew, xxvi, 46.

to its lowest step, as representing the scene of the sufferings and death on the cross, as it appeared to the mind of Christ. In the sign of the cross and recitation of the 42d Psalm made by the Priest in commencing Mass, we figured to ourselves that we saw how that scene had affected Christ. Then, in the Priest who, profoundly inclined, recites the Confiteor, we imagined we had before us the unparalleled spectacle of Christ, the Man-God, prostrate upon the naked ground, bathed in the blood which had been trickling down from the pores of His Sacred Body. This bloody sweat was produced by the agonizing combat between His inferior and superior wills as to the drinking, or not, of the chalice of His Passion. It seemed as if we heard Him expostulating with His Eternal Father and begging to be spared such suffering and death; yet, soon after, offering Himself as ready, nay, exceedingly eager to suffer and die. This eagerness, we said, finds its expression in the Priest's ascending the steps, to stand at the Altar till the consummation of the sacrifice.

In proceeding with the consideration of the next parts of the Mass, the ascending of the Priest to the

Altar still arrests the Christian's attention; for it reminds him of the four words which, after the thrice repeated prayer in Gethsemani, Christ spoke to His three Apostles, namely: "Rise, let us go." The Christian finds these words most significant, as they were spoken immediately after His long prayer; they reveal the fruit He had just reaped from it. The scene is completely changed: shortly before, He was seized with great fear and sorrow; but He now exhibits a magnanimous heart, and shows Himself urged by *intense and ardent desire* to begin and to consummate the redeeming work of His Passion and Death. He did not say: "Rise, let us flee;" for only the guilty, their consciences filled with fear and dread at the approach of danger, seek safety in flight. He said: "Rise, let us go." Where did He mean to go? To meet His enemies. Here, as throughout the whole stage of His Passion, the Christian finds the same characteristic marks in the conduct of Christ, namely: First, His innocence—for He feared not His accusers, but courageously and frankly sought to meet them. Secondly, His majesty, providence and power—for He foresaw the coming of His enemies, and limited their wicked designs within

the sphere of His own will, prediction and preordination. Thirdly, His free and spontaneous will, in which He went forth to meet His enemies, headed by His betrayer. He acted thus that none might think He had been prevailed against, and that all should understand that the surrendering of Himself was an act of His highest condescension, humiliation and generosity to suffer and to die for all men. "Rise," therefore, said He, not to take our flight, but "let us go" and meet Judas; or, as St. Jerome puts it, "Let us go and die."

When the Priest has ascended to the Altar, after a short prayer said in an inclined posture, he kisses it. In this the Christian sees the memorable moment when, at the head of a great multitude armed with swords and clubs, Judas came up to Jesus and hailed Him, saying: "Hail Rabbi," and in so saying, "kissed Him."[1]

In this kiss the Christian sees the sign of true friendship turned into an instrument of betrayal—the outward profession of sincere love into a cover to dissimulated perfidy. Here, the Christian remembers that, when seated with the twelve Apostles at

[1] St. Matthew, xxvi, 49.

His last supper, Christ knew that Judas was to betray Him, for He then said to them: "Amen I say to you, that one of you is about to betray me."[1] Yet He would not tell his name, in order not to disgrace him before his companions, and also to show that He knew his wicked design, and thus offer him an opportunity to profit by the hinted warning. Even now that He had just said to His Apostles: "Behold, he is at hand who will betray me,"[2] Christ refrains from giving his name; but, instead of that, He allows Himself to be kissed, though He knows that this kiss was intended to serve as a sign to the soldiers to lay their hands upon Him. Nay, more: He not only allows him to kiss Him, but calls him "friend."[3] St. Luke says that, to help him to see the hideousness of his crime, He gently chided him, calling him by his name, and saying: "Judas, dost thou betray the son of man with a kiss?" These words should have affected Judas's heart, but the Christian remembers that he remained obstinate.

What causes the Christian to wonder more is that, when the armed band heard Christ say that He was

[1] St. Matthew, xxvi, 21.
[2] *Ibid.*, xxvi, 46.
[3] *Ibid.*, xxvi, 50.

Jesus of Nazareth, whom they were looking for,[1] struck by His meekness and divine majesty, "they went backward and fell to the ground;"[2] yet Judas, who saw this, was unmoved! But the greatest of all wonders—one that can never be effaced from the Christian's memory, is the conduct of Jesus towards Judas: His boundless kindness and patience with him, in bearing with Him for three years, though he was known to Him as a thief and a traitor; in allowing him to continue to be counted as one of the twelve Apostles and to fill the office of procurator; in not even by a hint exposing his wickedness. This is a fact which acts upon the Christian's mind, and so masters his heart that he sees that Christ has by it intimated what the law of charity requires of all in dealing with enemies. No revenge is permitted, and nothing short of sincere love is expected. Christ showed Judas incessant marks of love, in order to win back and save him. He set the example of returning good for evil. All Christians must follow it.

Nor is this all. The Christian knows that he also, like Judas, is a member of the household of

[1] St. John, XVIII, 5. [2] *Ibid.*, XVIII, 6.

Christ, and, like him, has taken the sweet breads at the Eucharistic table with Christ, and walked with God in His house, the Church, with consent;[1] that is, professing true friendship for Him. Yet the Christian is conscious that he, too, has been guilty of treacherously kissing Christ by using profane or uncharitable language, or by harboring sinful desires or sentiments in his heart. Notwithstanding all this the Christian knows how meekly, patiently and mercifully Christ has borne with him; how often He has recalled him to repentance and amendment, and how persistently He has pressed him to return to the former friendship. In this conduct of Christ the Christian sees a strong motive for confidence in His mercy, and an urgent invitation to become reconciled and remain henceforth faithful to Him.

THIRD INSTRUCTION.

Two things formed the principal subject of last Sunday's Instruction. The first was the eagerness of Christ to deliver Himself into the hands of His

[1] Ps., LIV, 14.

enemies to suffer and die on a cross for their redemption and salvation, and for that of all other men. The second was His extraordinary meekness, patience and mercy towards Judas in the whole course of his treachery. The Christian will not ask what became of the wretch, for he well remembers the words of Christ spoken at His last supper, namely: "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for him if that man had not been born."[1] These words forebode ill of Judas's ending.

It was with the perfidious kiss of Judas in the garden of Gethsemani, as with the eating of the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden; as by that act of disobedience, the evil spirit caused Adam and his posterity to fall into sin, and by sin to bring on death; so, by his treacherous kiss, Judas brought on Christ an uninterrupted series of terrible torments, and a most cruel death.

THE PRIEST GOES TO THE MISSAL.

Deeply horrified at Judas's crime, the Priest, with his joined hands on the Altar, before and after

[1] St. Mark, xiv, 21.

kissing it, humbly calls upon the saints whose relics lie incased before him, and upon all other saints, to pray to the Lord for mercy and pardon for his sins. After this short prayer, he passes on to the Missal. To the eyes of the Christian, this passing of the Priest represents Christ who, bound with ropes, is hurriedly and rudely led away by the armed mob, and brought to the house of Annas, "And they led Him away to Annas first."[1] The Christian recognizes this man as the principal instigator of the capture of Christ; as the man who, on the evening of that very night, had promised to give Judas thirty pieces of silver upon the delivery of his Master. Having, therefore, complied with his part of the bargain, Judas now asks Annas to comply with his. It was then that Judas received the price of treason. This was the last time that Jesus saw His betrayer.

THE INTROIT.

Standing before the Missal, the Priest reads the Introit. This part of the Mass reminds the Christian of Christ standing as a criminal before Annas,

[1] St. John, XVIII, 13.

and receiving a slap on the face from one of the servants for having meekly spoken in defence of His own disciples and doctrine.[1] After this ill-treatment, Annas sent Him bound to his son-in-law, the high priest Caiphas.[2]

THE PRIEST GOES TO THE MIDDLE OF THE ALTAR.

This sending of Christ finds its symbol in the Priest going to the middle of the Altar, where he recites the *Kyrie eleison* and the *Gloria in excelsis*. At this juncture, another most sorrowful scene presents itself before the Christian's mind. While compassionating Jesus still bound with ropes, the Christian feels most keenly pained at seeing Caiphas perversely engaged in finding false witnesses, in summoning all the priests, the scribes, and the ancients, to meet him in Council, in taking testimony, going through a mock trial, and condemning Jesus.[3] But what pains the Christian most, is the revolting sight of the impudence displayed in accepting false testimony against Him, in perverting His

[1] St. John, XVIII, 19–22.
[2] *Ibid.*, XVIII, 24.
[3] St. Matthew, XXVI, 59.

sayings, and silencing the voice of justice. Here, the Eternal Truth is accused of blasphemy, the Eternal Life is declared worthy of death ; and He who went about, especially through Jerusalem, doing good,[1] is seized upon by a raging mob,—is spit upon,—struck in the face, and mocked.[2] Meanwhile, Jesus was silent. But Peter, who was there, and saw all the ignominies which were heaped upon his Divine Master, was not silent. Peter, who, on the evening of that very night, had sworn fidelity to Him, and professed himself ready to die for Him, —Peter, who, upon seeing Him seized by the armed mob, had tried to defend Him sword in hand, and, with it, had cut off an ear from Malchus, one of the high-priest's servants,—Peter, who had hitherto excelled the other Apostles in zeal, and had been first in acknowledging the divinity of Christ ;—thus Peter spoke out before his Master's enemies ; but his words were a thrice repeated denial of Him ! Oh, if Judas ! and not a woman,—had been present at this denial, he would have recognized Peter and denounced him to the high-priest as a disciple of Christ, and as the author of the cutting off of the

[1] Acts, x, 38. [2] St. Matthew, xxvi, 65-68.

ear from one of the servants. But Judas had fallen a prey to utter despair; he had thrown away in the temple the price of treason, and hanged himself.

THE PRIEST TURNS TOWARDS THE PEOPLE TO SAY DOMINUS VOBISCUM.

Having recited the *Kyrie eleison* and the *Gloria in excelsis*, the Priest again kisses the Altar; then he turns towards the people and says: *Dominus vobiscum*—the Lord be with you. By this the Christian is reminded of Christ, who, immediately after the third denial, cast a glance at Peter.[1]

PETER MET HIS MASTER'S EYE.

It was a glance of loving reproach and of proffered mercy. . . . It instantly reminded him of what Jesus had foretold him only the evening before, when He said: "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."[2] It was a glance which searched the inmost depths of his heart, and moved him to repentance. In fact, "going forth, he wept bitterly."[3]

[1] St. Luke, XXII, 61.

[2] St. Matthew, XXVI, 75.

[3] *Ibid.*

That glance made him acknowledge that, though without the weather was very cold,[1] his heart within had been much colder towards Jesus; that he was wrong to have followed Him "afar off"[2] instead of near; that his dastard denial of Him was due to his presuming that he could withstand the influence of bad company. The effect of that divine glance was ever felt by Peter; for, tradition says that his eyes never ceased shedding copious tears throughout the rest of his life, so vehement was his grief for the sin of denial, though it had been most generously forgiven him by his Divine Master.

After these considerations, the Christian finds himself before three figures in one group, namely: Christ between Judas and Peter, each conveying a history of very grave moment. Christ had warned both of the impending danger of unfaithfulness; both disregarded His warning; hence, both miserably fell. After the fall Judas received at Christ's hands even greater marks of attention and love than during the preceding three years. Christ desired to reclaim him, save him, but he would not yield! St. Peter, on the contrary, was recalled only once, and

[1] St. John, XVIII, 18. [2] St. Mark, XIV, 54.

that by a single glance, but it was enough; for he immediately surrendered to Christ. With so many proffered opportunities, Judas died impenitent; and with his life he lost his exalted dignity, all honor, even the money—and, above all, his soul!

Peter availed himself of the first opportunity, secured the coveted pardon, lived a long life—a life rich of holiness and merits. He was raised to the highest dignity upon earth—that of Vicar of his Divine Master—the visible head of His Church. His name is held in benediction throughout all ages here below, and his soul is in heaven enjoying the reward of his timely repentance, his subsequent great sanctity and his apostolic labors.

Christ, who is the dominant figure, shows Himself as ever meek, patient and merciful; for all He wishes is to draw all to Himself,[1] that through Him all may be saved.[2]

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[1] St. John, XII, 32. [2] St. Luke, XIX, 10.

FOURTH INSTRUCTION.

In the last Instruction we considered the passing of the Priest from the middle of the Altar to the Missal as representing Christ who, bound with ropes, was hurriedly and rudely led away by an armed mob to the house of Annas, the man who on that occasion paid Judas the thirty pieces of silver, which he had bargained to give him as the price of treason. In the Priest reading the Introit, we viewed Christ standing as a criminal before Annas, scornfully questioned by him, and receiving a cruel indignity from one of the servants. In the Priest's going from the Missal to the middle of the Altar, we imagined that we saw Christ sent by Annas to Caiphas, and that we witnessed all the ignominies He submitted to at the hand of the latter. We spoke of Peter and of his triple denial of his Divine Master.

Finally, the Priest's turning towards the people and saying *Dominus vobiscum*, reminded us of Christ casting a glance at Peter to recall him and move him to repentance. This fact led us to admire the extraordinary traits of mercy and love exhibited by

Christ towards both Judas and Peter; and hence, to rejoice in seeing Peter immediately repentant and forgiven. It likewise led us to grieve over Judas for his obstinacy and impenitent death.

To-day we shall proceed to the next part of the Mass, namely: of the Priest's going to the Missal and reading the Epistle. This represents Christ brought before Pontius Pilate. Here the Christian bears fresh in his mind the scene which led to the subsequent episode. To the Christian the Epistle is a written communication which reminds him of the dreadful night in which the guilty high-priests, scribes and ancients vented their hatred and violence against the innocent Christ; in which they resembled the "raven which had gone forth from Noe's ark, and did not return, because it was feeding on the carcasses it had found on the mountains."[1] It also reminds the Christian of the fact that at day-break after that night, they all "met in council—held a consultation,"[2] pronounced Christ guilty. They had the power of stoning Him to death only; so, in order that he might be more cruelly tormented, they again had Him bound with ropes. Thus they

[1] Gen., VIII, 6, 7. [2] St. Mark, XV, 1.

led Him to Pilate,[1] that the Roman, a Gentile, holding the civil power from his Roman Government, might hear their charges against Christ, convict Him and condemn Him to death—and death on the cross.

Seeing Christ standing before His false accusers in the Court of the Governor of Judea, the Christian is reminded of the "dove which came to Noe's ark carrying a bough of an olive tree, with green leaves in her mouth."[2] Christ was there to receive the sentence of the cruelest death from both Jews and Gentiles, that He might suffer and die for both, and thereby work out the salvation of all.

THE BEGINNING OF THE READING OF THE EPISTLE.

As the reading of the Epistle begins, the Christian thinks of the opening of Christ's trial by Pilate. The first question asked of Christ's accusers was: "What is your charge against this man?" The Christian well remembers that they answered, saying: "If he were not a malefactor we should not have delivered him up to thee."[3] At such evil

[1] St. Luke, XXII, 70.
[2] Gen., VIII, 10, 11.
[3] St. John, XVIII, 29, 30.

treatment of the Lord by the proud Pilate, the Christian's heart is filled with holy indignation. It is deeply affected by this contrast to the extreme kindness with which He had received the adulteress whom the Jews had brought to Him, that He might judge her.[1] From His profound humility in permitting Himself to be so vilified, the Christian learns that since the sovereign benefactor of all suffered Himself to be looked upon as a malefactor, he should also cherish humility, consider it a happy thing to do good to all, and to bear in patience evil imputations.

THE CONTINUATION OF THE READING OF THE EPISTLE

Represents the continuation of Christ's trial by Pilate. In fact, after having heard the imputation of Christ's guilt, Pilate shirking his official responsibility, said to His accusers: "Take Him you, and judge Him according to your law."[2] But this evasion profited him nothing; for they replied, saying: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death,"[3] and forthwith they formulated the follow-

[1] St. John, VIII, 7. [2] St. John, XVIII, 31. [3] *Ibid.*

ing charges: 1st. by His false doctrine He stirred up the people to sedition; 2nd. He forbade them to pay tribute to Cæsar; 3rd. He called Himself Christ the King, and claimed to be the Messiah.

In these charges the Christian sees many calumnies; for, far from "stirring up the people to sedition," the Lord rather excited them to penance and to all sorts of virtues, and even went so far as to direct them to observe and do all the things that were enjoined by the Scribes and Pharisees who were sitting upon the chair of Moses.[1] As to the second charge, it was purely a political one;—yet one which was as false as their hearts were wicked; for they well knew the prompt and clear answer He had given to their cunning question: whether or not it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar? And He had categorically pronounced in favor of the tribute.[2] Then also, there was the fact that He had paid tribute for Himself and His disciple Peter.[3] As to the third charge, He had not called Himself temporal King as the Romans understood royalty; on the contrary, when they wished to make Him King,

[1] St. Matthew, XXIII, 2, 3.
[2] St. Mark, XII, 14–17.
[3] St. Matthew, XVII, 26.

He fled from them and hid Himself in the mountain.[1] As for naming Himself the Messiah, His works bore more than sufficient testimony to it.

Pilate admitted that the charges were not sustained, for, going out to the Jews, he said to them: "I find in him no fault at all."[2] But Pilate was a politician without principles. Had he had a due regard for justice, he would have done his duty at once, and let Christ go free. He was one of those who place their own interests above every other consideration, and are quite ready to sacrifice right for temporal gain. In reality, he was afraid of the Jews, and carefully avoided doing anything to excite discontent among them. He knew that they were a set of fanatics, and he wanted to humor them. But his cunning availed him nothing; for they saw through his duplicity. They knew that while he was trying to appease them, he had not the courage to save Christ. Hence, the most influential and determined leaders of the conspiracy pressed Pilate to make good the charges they had laid against Christ. Pilate still hesitated, and they became all the more exasperated. With greater emphasis they

[1] St. John, VI, 15. [2] St. John, XVIII, 38.

repeated the political charge against Christ, saying: "He stirreth up the people throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place."[1]

The reading of the Epistle being ended, another scene follows. It is represented by the Priest's reading in a lower tone of voice portions of psalms called *Gradual* and *Tract.* In the Churches where the Gregorian Chant accompanies the High Mass, the first verse of the Gradual or of the Tract is sung by one chanter only; the remaining portion being then entoned by the whole choir. According to this symbolization, the moment the Priest finishes the Epistle and begins to read something else in a lower tone of voice, the Christian is reminded of what Pilate thought and resolved to do as soon as he heard that Christ was a Galilean. The Christian sees in Pilate's mind the thought that he had finally found the means of ridding himself of a matter which greatly embarrassed him; and that since Galilee was under the jurisdiction of Herod, he would send Christ to him,[2] for judgment.

The remaining portion of the Gradual or Tract, which the whole choir sings, and which the Priest

[1] St. Luke, XXIII, 5. [2] St. Luke, XXIII, 7.

reads in a low tone of voice, reminds the Christian of the high-priests, of the Scribes and ancients' whispering to one another, and casting threatening looks at Pilate, thus showing their determination to sacrifice Christ to their fury, yet manifesting great fear of seeing their machinations foiled.

We cannot end this Instruction without asking: "But what of Christ while He was surrounded by the immense multitude of His enemies, all raging, all breathing hatred against Him, and all thirsting for His blood? He was all that long time meek and silent! He was silent even after He had been entreated by Pilate to speak and defend Himself from the many accusations made against Him." Before such a spectacle of meekness and silence, the Christian is amazed. He is taught by it to summon all his virtues with charity and prudence, especially to assist him to withstand his trials, be they even personal attacks or vile aspersions upon his honor; for the Divine Master has set the example, and it behooves the Christian, by imitation, to prove himself His worthy disciple.

FIFTH INSTRUCTION.

Last Sunday, we said that the Priest, going to the Missal and reading the Epistle, represents Christ sent bound by Caiphas to Pilate.

In considering this part of the Mass, we first pictured to ourselves the venomous hatred shown against the Lord by His accusers, and the unprincipled conduct of the judge. Then, we devoted our attention to the verses which the Priest reads in a low tone of voice after the Epistle. We were reminded by them of the Jews whispering among themselves, and of the resolution taken by Pilate to rid himself of Christ by sending Him to Herod for trial and judgment. Finally, we rested our eyes on Christ, and saw Him perfectly meek and silent amidst the many vile vituperations and savage threats of His deadly enemies, and still silent to the pressing solicitations of Pilate to speak and defend Himself. From this example we learned how to govern ourselves in our trials, in order to be worthy disciples of the Divine Master.

The parts of the Mass for to-day's consideration are the carrying of the Missal to the Gospel side,

and the prayer *Munda cor meum* (cleanse my heart), recited by the Priest, bowing reverently before the middle of the Altar. The carrying of the Missal to the Gospel side represents Christ led from Pilate to Herod. The very thought of Herod's name strikes the Christian with terror; for it reminds him of the first Herod, misnamed the Great, who, upon learning of the birth of the Saviour in Bethlehem, ordered the massacre of the Innocents, for which crime his living flesh was later eaten by worms. It also reminds the Christian of his son who succeeded him on the throne, and followed him in his brutality; for it was this second Herod who had St. John the Baptist beheaded;—he lived incestuously with Herodias, and, not long after, perished with her in exile and misery.

It was to this Herod, Herodias's accomplice in the murder of the Baptist, that Christ was brought. What could be expected of him? In verses 8, 9 and 10 of xxiii of his Gospel, St. Luke informs the Christian that "Herod, seeing Jesus, was very glad, for he was desirous for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things of Him: and he hoped to see some sign wrought by Him. And he

questioned Him in many words. But He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the Scribes stood by, earnestly accusing Him." This short detailed history reveals to the Christian what Herod's bent of mind was. He knew that Christ was brought to him for trial and judgment; that an immense crowd of them had followed Him, hooting at Him all the way to his palace, and that His accusers were repeating their false charges against Him. Knowing all this, his obvious duty was to examine His case, and then, either condemn, or acquit Him. But no; Herod hailed His presence as affording him the long-coveted opportunity to amuse himself by witnessing some of the miracles he had heard so much about. From this, the Christian learns the voluptuary's frame of mind: he only thinks of amusements and frivolities. Christ saw Herod's unworthy motives; He refused to gratify him. He could have wrought miracles before him, and thereby influenced him to set Him free; but He would not "cast His pearls before swine."[1] Here, the Christian realizes the necessity

[1] St. Matthew, VII, 6.

of returning to God in true repentance, and securing His pardon for grievous sins committed, before the sinner can receive the pearls of divine graces. There was also another reason why Christ would not work miracles before Herod: it was that His work of our redemption through His Passion and Death might not be prevented, or delayed. Here two highly important things affect the Christian: one is the desire of Christ to suffer and to die for all men; the other is the danger of asking for graces, or doing acts of religion such as alms-giving or hearing sermons, from unworthy motives; and of having our petitions, or acts of religion, rejected by God.

Now we return to the Priest who, bowing reverently before the middle of the Altar, recites the prayer *Munda cor meum*—cleanse my heart. This part of the Mass reminds the Christian of that portion of the Gospel, in which it is stated that Christ even refused to say a word in answer to the many questions asked of Him by Herod. Why? Because they were all prompted by vain curiosity. Considering himself grossly insulted, "Herod and his courtiers began to despise Him, and all his army

began to scoff at Him," and in order to parade Him as a fool and a sham king, he "put on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate.[1] In this treatment of the Lord, the Christian sees Herod's heart: he was a robber, a murderer, a public sinner, a man who had sinned and was still sinning against the whole Decalogue. It was this man long lost to every sentiment of honor, nay, of humanity, who had Christ clothed in a white garment in order to make Him a laughing-stock and exhibit Him on the streets as a fool. The Christian knows by Herod's ending who the real fool was. But he also knows that Christ bore the ignominy of wearing that white garment and being mocked, in order to show His own innocence, and to recover for us the innocence which we had lost through Adam's fall; and also to make all men understand what a blessed thing it is "to bear with great tribulations for the noble object of having their souls washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb."[2] This consideration reminds the Christian of the old saying: "It is Roman to do brave acts; but it is Christian to bear with great tribulations." Hence, the Christian

[1] St. Luke, XXIII, 11. [2] Apoc., VII, 14.

delights in recalling to mind the Apostles who "went from the presence of the council rejoicing, that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."[1] Similarly, St. Paul, in a burst of intense divine love, said: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.[2] In addition to all this, the Christian seems to see the multitudes of pagans, nay, the very executioners, astounded at beholding the Martyrs rejoicing and singing praises to the Lord while suffering the most excruciating torments—each saying in the language of the protomartyr St. Stephen: "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."[3] The Christian knows that tribulations borne with fortitude and resignation are like the "waters which run out of the Saviour's fountain,"[4] which wash the souls from their stains of sin, and make them white by clothing them with the garment of divine grace. People of the world who seek and enjoy the pleasures it affords, do not understand this language;

[1] Acts, v, 3.
[2] Gal., vi, 14.
[3] Acts, viii, 55.
[4] Isaias, xii, 3.

nay they consider it to be great foolishness not to smart under the pressure of tribulations. They do not know their work: they are, therefore, to be pitied; the more so, because they cannot find the craved-for comfort. But they who are schooled by Christ "draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains."[1] They all cry out in the same pathetic language: "My Lord Jesus, to suffer for Thee, is a delight to me." Like St. Paul, they "reckon, that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come:"[2] hence they exclaim with St. Francis of Assisium, "so great is the bliss that I have in sight, that in every tribulation I find my delight."

SIXTH INSTRUCTION.

Last Sunday we saw the meaning of the carrying of the Missal to the left side of the Altar, and of the prayer *Munda cor meum* (cleanse my heart) recited by the Priest, bowing reverently. You will remember that the first part represents the

[1] Isaias, XII, 3. [2] Rom., VIII, 18.

taking of Christ from Pilate to Herod for trial and judgment. Having looked into the personal character of the first two Herods, we were horrified at the mere thought that Christ should be judged by one of them. We saw, in imagination, the murderer of St. John the Baptist, who cynically turned the presence of Christ into an occasion for sport. We admired the conduct of the Lord in refusing to gratify his unworthy wishes. From this we drew the moral that sinners cannot receive God's grace for conversion and pardon for sins, till they sincerely repent, earnestly endeavor to abandon their evil ways, and make use of the proper means to obtain forgiveness; and that our petitions and acts of religion must be prompted by good motives, or they are rejected by God.

As to the second part, namely, the prayer *Munda cor meum*, most reverently recited by the Priest, you will remember that it represents Christ refusing to answer any of the questions asked of Him by Herod. We saw how this cruel tyrant, with his courtiers and army, took revenge on Christ for the rebuke He had administered to his vanity and wicked curiosity. Finally, we entered into the motives of Christ in

bearing the ignominy of wearing a white garment, and being mocked as a fool. We found that they were to show His innocence and to train all men in the school of mortification; we learned the lesson that it is Christian to bear tribulations, and thus follow the example of those who found joy in following Christ.

To-day, we will consider the next two parts of the Mass, namely, the Gospel and the Creed.

THE GOSPEL.

When the Priest begins to read the Gospel, the people stand. This universally established practice, which dates back to the times of the Apostles, owes its origin to the belief that the Gospel contains what it means, namely, good tidings to all men, for it holds what Jesus Christ has said and done for them, and, consequently the Gospel deserves, like Its author, supreme respect and veneration. This is the reason why the Church directs the people to stand during the reading of the Gospel,—that they may extend a most loving welcome to Christ Himself, manifest their eagerness to listen to Him, and pub-

licly profess their belief that He is not only man, but God. So far, in the several stages of His Passion that have come under consideration, the Christian has seen Christ only as man, though perfectly meek and patient. But now, the reading of the Gospel by the Priest, reminds the Christian that Christ is also God; and that it was He Himself who declared this to be so; and that this declaration was solemnly made by Him before Caiphas. Greatly vexed to see Christ silent before His accusers, the high priest said to Him: "I adjure Thee, by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ the Son of God."[1] It was a most insidious question, for the answer to it entailed death. Christ knew this; yet, when He heard the name of God mentioned, He would no longer be silent, but answered saying: "I am;"[2] and in order to make His assertion unequivocal and more impressive, and to warn them not to think that He was not God, because He was now debased and despised, He added: the day will come when "you shall see" me "sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and

[1] St. Matthew, xxvi, 63. [2] St. Mark, xiv, 62.

coming with the clouds of heaven."[1] It was Christ in His human nature who this time called Himself not only the son of man, but the Son of God; and openly told His judges that if He was their prisoner, they would one day have to appear before His judgment-seat and be judged by Him. The Christian finds this inversion suggestive of deep practical thought; he is taught the important lesson that, when, at any time, he is humbled and afflicted, he should comfort himself by thinking that his exaltation will in a short time follow; and, on the contrary, when he is puffed up and proud, it will be a good means of humbling himself, to remember that the day of judgment is at hand when pride shall be humbled. Therefore, it is wise to choose to be humbled with Jesus in this life, in order to be glorified by Jesus in the next.

But, instead of profiting by the solemn and unmistakable declaration made by Christ that He was the Son of God and would one day sit to judge His present judges and the whole world, Caiphas threw up his hands in horror; then, in a fit of indignation, he rent his garments, and cried out: "He hath

[1] *Ibid.*, XIV, 62.

blasphemed, what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy; what think you?"

In answer to this calumny and this demand for their verdict, the judges sprang from their seats, and said: "He is guilty of death."[1] In all this the Christian sees the work of envy. But for envy, the high priest and the scribes would have recognized in the words of Christ the fulfilment of David's prophecy on His Divinity: "The Lord hath said to my Lord: sit Thou at my right hand";[2] and the realization of Daniel's vision, that the Messias "advanceth upon the clouds of heaven unto the Ancient of Days."[3] But envy threw a dark veil over all the prophecies concerning the Christ, and so blinded the keepers and expounders of them, that they pronounced guilty of death Him whom they should have welcomed as the promised Messias, and helped to prepare the Jewish nation to receive. They pronounced guilty of death Him who had raised the dead to life, given sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb; Him whom the multi-

[1] St. Matthew, XXVI, 65-66.
[2] Ps., CIX, 1.
[3] VII, 13.

tudes had often acclaimed as a great prophet. By His teachings, miracles and life, Christ had proved that He was what He had declared Himself to be,—God. But they knew Him not, because He was carrying the load of the sins of all men, which He had taken upon Himself. It was on account of man's sins that He was pronounced guilty of death; for He had taken upon Himself the sentence which God had passed upon Adam and his descendants: "In what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death."[1] Of His own free will He paid all men's penalty, that by His death He might recall them all to the life of grace and of everlasting glory. Hence, it is that with perfect generosity, meekness and patience, He submitted to the sentence of death; and, as if He had been the only one guilty of it, He offered Himself to His Eternal Father as victim for the sins of all, to free all from eternal death, and teach all to bear with fortitude and patience all sorts of insults, calumnies and injustices, out of love for Him, and in appreciation of His example.

[1] Gen., II, 17.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS ON THE FOREHEAD, MOUTH AND BREAST.

Now, the Christian understands the meaning of the universal practice of making the sign of the cross with the right thumb on the forehead, mouth and breast, when the priest begins to read the Gospel. By *the sign of the cross on the forehead,* the people present glory in acknowledging Jesus Christ as their Divine Teacher and Redeemer; by *the sign of the cross on the mouth,* they declare their readiness to make public profession of His teachings, and to confess their sins that they may obtain their forgiveness; and by *the sign of the cross on the breast,* they show that they cherish with gratitude His teachings, and are deeply grieved over their sins as the cause of His humiliations, sufferings and death. These three signs of the cross form, as it were, a rapid and summary act of consecration of their thoughts, words and actions to Jesus Christ, their Lord God, and Redeemer.

THE SERMON.

After the Gospel is read, it is preached. The Priest does this in compliance with the command of the

Lord Jesus Christ who, according to St. Mark, said: "... Preach the Gospel to every creature,"[1] and, according to St. Matthew, said: "Go, ... and teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."[2]

Evidently, this command is correlative, and therefore, implies the obligation of the people to hear God's law from the Priest's lips. In fact, said our Blessed Lord to His disciples and their successors: "He that heareth you, heareth me."[3] The things commanded are the truths to be believed and professed, and the precepts to be observed. Through them, God becomes the guide to all men's minds and wills. Man is born with a nature corrupted by the sin of the first parents, and on that account, his mind is dimmed by the darkness of ignorance, and cannot, of itself, see all his relations to his Creator, Preserver and Redeemer. His will is weak and inclined to evil, and cannot, of itself, overcome the strong opposition which it feels to what is good and right; consequently all men stand in constant need of supernatural help, of divine light to clear their mind from the darkness of ignorance, and of

[1] XVI, 15. [2] XXVIII, 20. [3] St. Luke, X, 16.

divine fear to curb their wills and spur them to the observance of God's commandments.

Now, God conveys that light to the mind and that power to the will through the Gospel preached by His Priests. It is not the voice of the Priest that conveys them, as it is not the hand of the sower that causes the good seed to bring forth fruit. The Gospel preached, is the voice of God Himself, which penetrates the mind to enlighten it, and permeates the heart to move the will. Through the royal prophet, the Holy Ghost says: "God will give to His voice the voice of power;"[1] and, through St. Paul, He says: "the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword."[2] When our Blessed Lord compared the *Word of God* to the good seed, and having pointed out the four kinds of soil upon which it fell, declared that only that which touched good soil brought forth fruit, He showed the sort of dispositions with which the *Word of God* should be listened to. It should be listened to with great reverence,—treasured up in the memory, and with the earnest purpose of living up to it. By hearing it with these dispositions, it will

[1] Ps. LXVII, 34. [2] Heb. IV, 12.

enlighten the mind and reform the will; and thus prove the truthfulness of the sentence of the Holy Ghost: "He sent His word, and healed them."[1] When the sermon is over, the Priest recites the *Credo*.

THE CREED.

This part of the Mass represents the declaration made by Christ before Pilate that He was truly a King, but that His kingdom was not of this world.[2] To make clear what kind of king He was, He said: "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice."[3] Now, the Christian knows that the Creed contains the truth that Christ has taught to be believed by all: that He first taught that there is but one true God; and that in God there are three distinct and real persons, namely, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Secondly, that He taught the Mystery of His Incarnation, namely, that He, the only Son of God, was sent upon earth by God the Father to

[1] Ps., CVI, 20.

[2] St. John, XVIII, 33, 34-36.

[3] *Ibid.*, 37.

become man in order to save man; and, consequently, that no one can be saved unless he believes in these truths, for, said He: "This is eternal life; that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."[1] Thirdly, that He taught that true happiness does not consist in the enjoyment of riches, honors, pleasures, learning, worldly possessions; but in the kingdom of heaven, that is in the vision and possession of God. Hence it is, that the summing up of Christ's teaching was: "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[2] Therefore, when the Christian hears the Priest recite the Creed, he is reminded that Christ is his Divine Teacher, and that he should conform his life to His teachings, that he may fit himself for eternal life.

SEVENTH INSTRUCTION.

Last Sunday, the Gospel and Creed were the subjects of our consideration. We said that the Gospel means good tidings to all men concerning their sal-

[1] St. John, xvii, 3. [2] St. Matthew, iii, 2.

vation, and represents the declaration made by Christ before Caiphas that He was not only man, but also God. We mentioned that the practice of the people in standing at the reading of the Gospel is to show respect to it as to Christ Himself. We paid special attention to the words with which Christ laid stress upon the declaration of His own Divinity, namely, that a day would come when His enemies would see Him wield the power of God, and would have to appear before His judgment seat, and be judged by Him. From this inversion of relative position, we learned to comfort ourselves in the midst of humiliations by thinking of the coming exaltation, and to overcome the temptations of pride by remembering the day of judgment.

We remarked that the Jews failed to acknowledge Christ as the promised Messias because He was carrying the load of the sins of all men, and was paying their debt to God. In this we saw a strong motive for bearing our trials in the same spirit. This consideration brought to our minds the practice of making the sign of the cross with the right thumb on the forehead, mouth and breast, at the beginning of the Gospel; and we said that this

practice is a brief act of consecration of our thoughts, words and actions to Jesus Christ, our Lord God and Redeemer. Incidentally, we spoke of the preaching of the Word of God after the reading of the Gospel, and mentioned the spirit in which it should be received from the Priest's lips, in order to draw from it the twofold fruit.

Finally, we considered the Creed and said that it represents the declaration made by Christ before Pilate that He was truly a King, but that His Kingdom was not of this world; and that He had come upon earth to establish the Kingdom of Truth. From this we proceeded to show that the principal truths taught by Him, contained in the Creed, are the Unity of God, the Trinity of persons in God, the Incarnation and Redemption. It shows, too, the means to attain to the only one true happiness. We concluded by saying that the recitation of the Creed is a reminder of the established fact, that Christ is the Divine Teacher of all men, and that all should conform their lives to His teachings in order to fit themselves for the next life, which will be everlasting.

To-day, we shall enter upon the consideration of the second part of the Mass, which is, strictly speaking, *the beginning of the Holy Sacrifice.* We have thus far considered the first part, at which all were allowed to be present, and the Catechumens, namely those who were under religious instruction and preparing for baptism in a special manner. In olden times, these were dismissed before the Offertory, which is the beginning of the second part. At this, only exemplary Christians were allowed to be present. This ancient custom shows how greatly the Church venerated the sacred mysteries of the Altar, and how devoutly the Christians of to-day should assist at Mass.

The prayers, reading and recitation, in the first part, are solely intended to serve as means to prepare the faithful for the approaching most holy act of the Sacrifice which begins with the Offertory. At this stage, the matter for consecration is prepared.

The Christian cannot but admit that it was right and proper to exclude all the unworthy from the celebration of the sacred mysteries. He must acknowledge that though now sinners are no longer excluded from the Mass, yet it is most desirable that

they should fit themselves for it, and enable themselves to secure, at least, some of the precious fruits which are to be gathered from the Holy Sacrifice. They should, therefore, while at Mass, be animated by an earnest desire of conversion, acknowledge their unworthiness, grieve over their sins, earnestly invoke God's mercy, and firmly resolve to secure His pardon and to amend.

Immediately before the Offertory, a heart-touching scene is enacted between the Priest and the people, which recalls to mind the golden age of charity, when Christians were all of one mind and heart, as they were all united in the spirit and love of Jesus Christ. Placing his hands on the Altar, the Priest kisses it on the spot where the sacred stone is incased. This stone signifies Christ our Lord, who is the corner-stone of the Church.[1] The Priest kisses it with the strong desire of imbibing the spirit of Christ, that he may communicate a portion of it to the people present. Filled with it, the Priest turns towards the people, opens his hands, extends his arms, and, with this affectionate gesture, he salutes them, saying: *Dominus vobiscum*—the Lord be with

[1] 1 Cor., x, 4.

you. By this loving salutation, which was used by the prophets, and is, therefore, older than Christianity, the Priest wishes the people to possess the spirit of the Lord as fully as His beloved disciples possessed it, when He said to them: "Behold, I am with you."[1] The salutation being joyfully and gratefully received by the people, is instantly reciprocated through their representative, the server of the Mass, saying: *Et cum spiritu tuo*—and with thy spirit; meaning by this expression: "as thou from the Altar wishest that the Lord may be with us, so we from the body of the Church wish that He may be with thy mind, heart and soul, that thou mayest thus worthily pray for our salvation, and profitably perform the august act of the Sacrifice of the Mass."

After this, the Priest again turns towards the Altar, and says: *Oremus*—Let us pray. By this invitation, the Priest urges the people to do what Christ was wont to intimate to His disciples. This accounts for the fact that every part of the Mass begins with a prayer,—showing that the Church, in imitation of her Divine Founder, makes the success

[1] St. Matthew, XXVIII, 20.

of her acts depend upon prayer; and, accordingly, through the Priest, She urges the faithful to pray that they may become more and more united to God in proportion as they are approaching the great act of consecration.

The call to prayer is immediately followed by *The Offertory.* This part of the Mass commands the special attention of the Christian, for it contains all that constitutes the true ideal of Christian life, namely, prayer, alms-giving, fasting and holy communion. Part of the Offertory consists of a verse of a psalm, which is read by the Priest; and of the bread and wine, which are offered to God, and are to be changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ at the consecration. The other part of the Offertory consists of offerings by the people.

Down to the ninth century, a whole psalm was sung, and when necessary, a portion of it repeated by the Choir, so that during that interval, all the people might come to the communion-railing and present their offerings, which consisted of bread and wine. Out of the whole, only that quantity was used, which was required for consecration, and for communion to the people. The remainder, together

with other donations, formed the subsistence of the Priests.

Owing to serious inconveniences arising from different kinds of bread and wine that were offered, the Church has since discontinued that practice; and, as a substitute, she has directed the people to make their offerings in money to procure the things necessary for the Altar, and for the support of the Priests. Should a Christian of to-day be asked what the grounds are for the continuation of this practice, he will readily point them out the fact that God Himself had in the Old Law prescribed that the people should offer the victims and oblations for the sacrifices, and that a portion thereof should be given to the priests.[1] Hence, in XVI, verses 16 and 17, Deuteronomy, it is written that God ordered Moses to say to the people: "No one shall appear with his hands empty before the Lord: but every one shall offer according to what he hath."

Far from being discontinued, the practice of making offerings for the sacrifice of the New Law, increased in liberal observance, for the early Christians are described in their Annals, written by St.

[1] Leviticus, II, 10.

Luke, as selling their holdings, and laying down the price thereof, before the feet of the Apostles.[1] No wonder, then, that they should also be therein described as "persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of the bread, and in prayers."[2] Detached from the goods of this earth, they craved those of heaven, and found it their great joy to have a pledge, nay, a foretaste, of it in the frequent communication of the breaking of the bread, which was the receiving of Holy Communion, as St. Paul explains it in the x, verse 16, of his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of the Lord?"

The Christian considers that to redeem us,—to bequeath to us the means of sanctification, and to open for us the gates of eternal glory, the Man-God, Jesus Christ, has offered all He had, nay, all Himself, for us to His Eternal Father. And, as if all this were not enough, He still constantly offers Himself as victim of propitiation upon the Altar, and gives His own Body and His own Blood for food to sustain us on the way to eternal life, and as

[1] Acts, IV, 34-35. [2] II, 42.

a pledge of it. This being so, the Christian feels that he cannot reasonably dispense himself from making some suitable returns to Him, which, in order to be worthy, ought to consist of the offering of his whole being to Him, and of a portion of his temporal goods to His Altar and its ministering Priests. It is with this consideration in view, that the Christian feels that, in proportion as he offers himself and of what he has, in the same proportion will he receive of the fruit of the Holy Sacrifice offered for him.

EIGHTH INSTRUCTION.

In the last instruction we saw the meaning of the various rites and ceremonies which occur immediately before the Offertory. At the very outset, we remarked that the prayers, reading and recitation, preceding it from the beginning of Mass, are solely intended to serve as means to prepare the faithful for the approaching adorable act of the Sacrifice; and we also said that the Catechumens, public sinners and infidels, were allowed to be present at that

part of the Mass, but were dismissed before the Offertory, as only the exemplary Christians were permitted to assist at the whole of the Mass. From this circumstance, we inferred that if, in our days, sinners are no longer excluded from participating in the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries, they should, at least, earnestly fit themselves for it by an earnest desire for conversion, sorrow for sins, and prompt use of the means to secure their pardon.

Afterward, we described the scene of love between the Priest at the Altar and the people in the body of the Church, as indicated by his saluting them with the words *Dominus vobiscum*—The Lord be with you, and by their reciprocated salutation to him, *Et cum spiritu tuo*—And with thy spirit. From this we draw the lesson that both the Priest and the people should be animated by the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is charity. We observed that its importance is enhanced by the meaning of the invitation extended by the Priest to the people, saying: *Oremus*—Let us pray; for by it we were made to understand that earnest prayer said in common is necessary to the obtaining of the charity of Christ, and, through it, to being fitted for the sharing in the precious fruits of the Holy Sacrifice.

We finally spoke of the Offertory, and said that, down to the ninth century, the people used to come to the communion-railing and offer bread and wine, part of which was for the Sacrifice of the Mass and for Holy Communion to the people, and the remaining part formed the subsistence of the priests. We mentioned the discontinuance of that ancient custom, and the substitution of offerings in money as a better means for procuring the necessaries for the Altar and the priests. In justification of this substitution, we quoted such arguments as cannot but satisfy even the most fastidious and ungenerously inclined Christians. To-day, we shall cross the threshold of the Holy Sacrifice. To appreciate and profit by the highly important things which will come before us for consideration, we need to summon all the light of our faith, and all the ardor of our charity.

The Christian well remembers the ignominious manner with which Herod dismissed Christ and sent Him back to Pilate. He also knows that while Pilate was desirous of saving Christ, His bitter enemies were all agreed to force the Governor to accede to their demand, and have Him put to the

death of the cross. Breathing hatred, they violently ushered Him for the second time before Pilate, and so intimidated the Governor with wild shouts and threats as to compel him to yield to them. As reasoning was of no use, Pilate tried to save Jesus by a veiled appeal to their veneration for the Easter Solemnity, which was to occur after the next day. Accordingly, availing himself of the custom existing among them of releasing one of the prisoners on that occasion, Pilate proposed they should choose either Jesus or the notorious malefactor, Barabbas, as the one to be set at liberty. The Christian is horrified at the mere thought of coupling Jesus with Barabbas, a lamb with a wolf, a just and innocent man with a wicked and hateful wretch, a benefactor with a thief, the Author of life with a murderer. But, upon reflection, the Christian deplores another even more horrible coupling, namely, that which the sinner makes by choosing to live in the state of sin, to gratify his evil passions and reject God's commandments.

No sooner had the Jews been asked which one they chose to be set free, than they frantically cried out: "Give us Barabbas, and crucify Jesus."[1] Find-

[1] St. Matthew, XXVII, 21, 22.

ing himself disappointed, Pilate asked them: "Why, what evil hath this man done? I find no cause of death in him."[1] But, as he saw that they persisted in clamoring for His death, Pilate, to temper their burning rage, and quench a little their thirst of blood, said: "I will have Him chastised, and then let Him go;"[2] and, in so saying, he delivered Jesus into the hands of the torturers, that they might scourge Him. In this proceeding of Pilate, the Christian sees how erroneous are the judgments of men, who, even in a clear case, give their verdict against justice and truth.

THE PRIEST TAKES OFF THE VEIL FROM THE CHALICE.

When the Priest takes off the veil from the Chalice, the Christian is reminded of the garments of which Jesus was stripped, and of the cruel welts made on His Sacred Body. Appalling as the sight of His mangled flesh and streaming blood must have been, the conduct of Jesus on that barbarous occasion arrests the special attention of the Chris-

[1] St. Luke, XXIII, 22. [2] *Ibid.*

tian, for he sees that far from asking for leniency, He silently submitted to the unjust and most cruel sentence,—nay, He very willingly offered His Body to the scourges, that He might satisfy for the sins of all men. Hence, with contrite heart and in humble acknowledgment, the Christian cries out: "It is my sins, O Lord Jesus, that have armed Thy torturers with scourges, and inflicted on Thy Sacred Body so many horrible wounds as to cover it from the sole of the foot unto the top of the head."[1] Yes, O Lord Jesus, Thou wert wounded for my iniquities,—bruised for my sins: Thou hast sacrificed all Thy health to heal my infirmities.

THE PRIEST OFFERING THE UNCONSECRATED HOST.

When the Christian sees the Priest offer the unconsecrated host to the Blessed Trinity for his own sins, and for the sins of those present, and for the faithful Christians, both living and dead, he is reminded of the gracious Saviour who, while enduring the many scourges, offered His bruised and bleeding Body as a loving sacrifice to His Father in

[1] Isaias, I, 6.

heaven for the remission of the sins of all men. The torturers had grown weary of scourging Him before Jesus wearied of desiring to suffer. While they were slashing His Body, tearing His flesh, and spilling His Blood in streams; the prayers of His Heart were carried by the Angels to His Father in Heaven.

THE POURING OF WINE AND A FEW DROPS OF WATER IN THE CHALICE.

Another rite in the Mass which strikes the Christian attention is that of first pouring wine and then a few drops of water in the Chalice for the Offertory. This mixing of the two elements in the Chalice, to the mind of the Christian, represents the blood and water which came out from the side of Jesus upon its being opened with a spear after His death: the wine is poured in the Chalice to represent the Blood of Christ, while the water which is poured with it is to represent the people for whose redemption the blood of Christ was shed. Now, as the wine and water mixed together become so united as not to be any longer separated, so the people who

persevere in faithfully and firmly believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, are no longer separated from Him. This is the reason why the Priest is directed, under pain of most grievous sin, to pour water with the wine in the Chalice; because, in the consecration, the wine without the water would give the Blood of Christ without the people, and water without wine would represent the people without the Blood of Christ.

This explanation helps to illuminate the meaning of the prayer which the Priest recites as he pours the water in the wine. The prayer is: "O God, who, in creating human nature, hast wonderfully dignified it, and still more wonderfully reformed it: grant that by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of His divine nature, who vouchsafed to become partaker of our human nature, namely Jesus Christ our Lord, Thy Son."

To impress upon the mind of the faithful, that Jesus Christ craved to suffer, and offered His sufferings to His Eternal Father for the salvation of all men, the Church, guided by His indwelling presence, causes the Priest to say in the act of the Oblation of the Chalice: "We offer" instead of

"I offer;" thus indicating that it is not the Priest alone who offers up the Chalice, but that both the Priest and the people do offer it together; and, therefore, the people also say with the Priest: "We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the Chalice of salvation, beseeching Thy clemency: that it may ascend before Thy divine Majesty, as a sweet odor, for our salvation, and for that of the whole world." Amen.

Then, again, the people are expected to join the Priest in the following supplication: "Accept us, O Lord, in the spirit of humility, and contrition of heart: and grant that the sacrifice we offer this day in Thy sight, may be pleasing to Thee, O Lord God."

NINTH INSTRUCTION.

Last Sunday, we crossed the threshold of the Holy Sacrifice. Its victim, our Lord Jesus Christ, was the principal figure before us. We considered Him between his deadly enemies and the unscrupulous judge, Pilate. It seems that we still hear the deafening shouts and threats of the enraged persecutors clamoring for His death, and that we still wit-

ness the gross injustice of the Governor in having Him barbarously scourged after having coupled Him vilely with the thief and murderer Barabbas, and publicly acknowledged His innocence. We briefly described the mangled and bleeding Body of Jesus, and making ours the language and sentiments of the horrified Christian, we humbly and sorrowfully acknowledged to Him that it is our sins that have armed His torturers and inflicted so many horrible wounds on Him. We said that the taking off of the veil from the Chalice represents the taking off of Jesus' garments and His subsequent cruel scourging. Finally, we remarked that the mixing of the water with the wine symbolizes the mixed stream of Blood and water that flowed from Christ's side upon the withdrawal of the spear, and that the wine represents the Blood of Jesus, while the water which is poured with it in the Chalice, represents the people for whose redemption His Blood was shed.

But of all things, the conduct of Jesus has impressed us the most; for we specially noticed that far from asking for leniency, He silently submitted to the unjust and most cruel sentence of scourging, just as He had silently and meekly borne

the infamy of being coupled with the notorious malefactor Barabbas, and had stood the humiliation of being made a party to the choice for deliverance. But our admiration knew no bounds when we reflected that He longed for His humiliations and sufferings, and offered them up as a loving sacrifice to His Father in Heaven that He might satisfy for the sins of all men. In this connection, we remarked that the torturers had grown weary of scourging Him before He would cease desiring to suffer, and that while His Sacred Body was slashed, His flesh torn, and His Blood spilt in streams, His Heart was pouring out prayers to His Father in Heaven for the salvation of mankind.

After all these things, we were told that the offering of the Chalice at Mass is made by *both* the Priest and the people present, and that *both* thereby entreat the Divine Majesty to vouchsafe to accept it as a sweet odor for the salvation of the whole world. The consideration of the next parts of the Mass upon which we shall enter to-day, will make even greater impressions upon our hearts, and forcibly elicit from them most wholesome sentiments and profitable resolutions.

As the taking off of the veil from the Chalice represents the stripping of the garments from Jesus that He might be scourged, so in *the pall*, a little square piece of linen, generally stiff, which the Priest puts *on the Chalice* after its Oblation, the Christian sees a reminder of *the crown of thorns* plaited for and put on the head of Jesus. Recalling to mind the description of this most cruel part of His Passion given by the Evangelists St. Mark (xv, 16–19) and St. Matthew (xxvii, 30, 31); the Christian stands aghast as he beholds the torturers throw aside the scourges, clothe with a purple garment the Body of Jesus, reduced to one wide gaping wound streaming with blood; then, put a reed in His right hand; and, finally, plait a crown of thorns, and press it down on His head. Then they bend their knees before Him, and while some spit upon Him and slap Him on the face, others pay Him a a mocking homage, saying: "Hail, King of the Jews."[1]

No human mind will ever be able to conceive the intensity of suffering caused by that crown of thorns as it was pressed down upon His head. According

[1] St. Matthew, xxvii, 29.

to some, the crown was formed of sea-thorns, which are exceeding sharp and stiff. They were many, and all plaited together into the form of a cap, so that the thorns were in great part fastened to the head; and with such great force and savageness were they pressed down upon Christ's Sacred Head, that, according to St. Bernard, the thorns pierced through the bones, nerves and veins, nay, the very brain. Great as his compassion for Jesus suffering such intense pain is, the Christian knows that he ought to be moved with as great sorrow for his sins as the accursed cause of the plaiting of that crown, and of the pressing down of it upon the Head of the good Lord and Saviour Jesus. Aware that it is written of the Jews: "If they had known Him, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory,"[1] the Christian sees the enormity of his sins. He has knowingly committed them in direct violation of the commandments, and utter disregard for the will of Him, whom he knows to be his God and Saviour. Hence, he cannot but see that his sins must truly be enormous, since they had to be atoned for by a chastisement so exceeding great. He, therefore,

[1] 1 Cor., II, 8.

acknowledges in shame and sorrow that it is because he sinned and would not cease sinning that Jesus suffered so intensely, and yearned to suffer more. It is because he would neither do penance for his sins, nor mortify his senses and evil appetites, that Jesus bore His sufferings with great patience and most ardent love. But just as the Christian is immersed in these holy sentiments, he notices that the Priest stands on the Epistle-side, and, while reciting part of the XXVth psalm, washes the extremities of both thumbs and forefingers.

THE LAVABO.

This ceremony conveys to the Christian a serious reminder and a most profitable suggestion. It recalls to him Pilate, who seeing that he could not prevail upon the Jews and save Jesus, took water, and washed his hands before the people, saying: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it."[1] It was a ridiculous performance, an act suggested by cowardice, showing that he was afraid of the high priests and princes of the Jews, and

[1] St. Matthew, XXVII, 24.

would, therefore, sacrifice Jesus rather than be reported by them to Cæsar and be supplanted. But had he been in earnest, he could have used his soldiers and kept them in check as he had done with the rebellious people on former occasions. At any rate, had he been a just judge, he would rather have resigned his office than violate the principle of justice. This view of the case is obvious to reason, and is in full accord with the teachings of the Holy Ghost, who, as we read in the VIIth chapter of Ecclesiasticus, says: "Seek not to be made a judge, unless thou hast strength enough to extirpate iniquities." Hence, with the water, Pilate succeeded in washing his hands, but not his conscience.

In making these observations on the unjustifiable act done by Pilate, the Christian feels that they are applicable to himself and all sinners as well. Therefore, no excuse can hold good for sacrificing the reverence and obedience to God by committing sin or living in the state of sin,—for exposing the soul to the danger of eternal damnation by putting off its conversion, and neglecting to do the right sort of penance.

THE PRIEST PRAYS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ALTAR.

The Christian has scarcely ceased to ponder these things, when he sees the Priest first with his eyes raised up to God, then with his joined hands on the edge of the middle of the Altar, praying in an inclined posture. The Christian knows that the Priest is then humbly supplicating the Blessed Trinity through the principal Mysteries of Redemption, to receive the offering of the Sacrifice about to be accomplished, and to accept it for his own salvation, and for that of the people present, and especially for those for whom it is offered, and also for those of whom commemoration is made. From this, the intelligent Christian draws the conclusion that since he, together with the Priest, is offering the Sacrifice, he, also, is expected to join the Priest in prayer that he may gain access to God and obtain His acceptance of it. The Christian is all the more impressed with the high importance of joining the Priest in prayer, when he hears him requesting the people to devote themselves to it, saying with a clear and entreating voice: *Orate, fratres*—Brethren, pray: when asking this of the people, the Christian notices that the

Priest performs a ceremony, which is the only one of the kind during the whole of the Mass: it is his turning towards the people and his immediate returning to face the Altar by making a circle. Upon reflection, this ceremony reminds the Christian of Christ who, with a scarlet garment on His mangled and bleeding Body, a reed in His right hand, and a crown of thorns on His Head, was shown to the people by Pilate, saying: *Ecce Homo*—Behold the man.[1] This spectacle was most piteous; yet the Christian knows that it first excited their scornful laughter, and soon after it made them break forth into the savage cry: "away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him."[2]

But to the Christian, the words *Ecce Homo*—Behold the man—are of precious significance: they sound in his ears as being addressed to him by Jesus, Himself. *Ecce Homo*, he hears Him say, "behold how I stood disfigured for thy sins; and how I, the Lord of lords, was forsaken from on high, and from below, and despised by all." *Ecce Homo*, "behold what torments I have endured from the thorns that pressed into My Head, that I might pick out the

[1] St. John, xix, 5. [2] *Ibid.*, 15.

sharp thorns of thy sins." *Ecce Homo*, behold how from the top of My Head to the soul of My Feet, I was but one gaping, bleeding wound, that I might perfectly heal thee of every hurt from sin; and so cleanse thee from every stain of it in My precious Blood, that thou mightest become pleasing and acceptable in My sight." *Ecce Homo*, "behold, and keep forever in thy mind the remembrance of this love, and with what zeal, and labor, and sorrow, I sought after thee, and be not after this, a stranger to Me." *Ecce Homo*, "behold Me, and be all Mine, even as I have made Myself all thine.

TENTH INSTRUCTION.

The explanation of the parts of the Mass which came under our consideration on last Sunday, will, let us hope, long remain impressed upon our minds and hearts. As you remember, we first spoke of *the pall*, a little square piece of linen, generally stiff, which the Priest puts on the Chalice after its Oblation. In it we saw a reminder of the *crown of thorns* plaited for, put on and pressed down, upon

the Head of Jesus, after He had been, mangled and bleeding, clad with a scarlet garment, and a reed had been placed in His right hand. We stood aghast on beholding Him in that most pitiable state, and at the thought of the intense pains He must have suffered. We dwell but little on the cruel and savage conduct of His torturers, because the Apostle says that, had they known Who Jesus really was, they would have spared Him. But we laid special stress on our own guilt, acknowledging that by our sins we have turned against Him, and deliberately disregarded Him, though we knew Him to be our God and Saviour.

Next, we gave our attention to the ceremony of the Priest's washing his thumbs and forefingers on the Epistle side, while reciting part of the xxvth Psalm. In this ceremony we found a reminder of the foolish performance of Pilate in washing his hands before the people, to show that he was in no way responsible for the past and future cruelties practiced on Jesus. We remarked that Pilate had succeeded in washing his hands; but not his conscience. Having branded Pilate's act as unjustifiable, we admit that nothing can excuse us for sacri-

ficing the reverence and obedience due to God by committing sin or living in a state of sin, or for indulging evil passions at the risk of the salvation of the soul.

In the Priest's praying in a suppliant posture, we realized the high importance of prayer, and felt that we could not dispense ourselves from attending to it, especially after having heard his tender request, *Orate, fratres*—Brethren, pray—for we were then reminded that as he and we are offering up the Holy Sacrifice to God, so both should entreat the Divine Clemency to accept it.

Finally, we gave our consideration to the ceremony of the Priest's turning toward the people and quickly turning again to face the Altar by making a circle. We said that this ceremony reminded us of Jesus who, with a scarlet garment on His mangled and bleeding Body, a reed in His hand, and a crown of thorns on His Head, was shown to the people by Pilate, saying: *Ecce Homo*—Behold the Man. We mentioned the savage cry of the people the moment they saw Him,—"Away with Him, crucify Him;" but we refrained from expressing our execration against their devilish wickedness,

and rather turned our attention to the words *Ecce Homo*—Behold the Man—as if addressed to us by Jesus Himself to show us how intensely He had suffered out of love for us, and how just are His claims that we should he all His, even as He had made Himself all ours.

The parts of the Mass for to-day's consideration will affect our hearts with still deeper sympathy for Jesus, and point to even stronger claims to our undivided love and fidelity.

A circumstance worthy of special notice is that from the moment the Priest has turned toward the people to request them to devote themselves to prayer, saying: *Orate, fratres*—Brethren, pray,—he no longer faces them till towards the end of Mass. He keeps himself closeted with God to entreat Him with increased fervor and renewed insistence to accept the Adorable Sacrifice he is about to offer. This religious silence is, however, soon broken by the recitation or singing of *the Preface, of the Sanctus and Hosanna;* to invite gently the people to dispose their hearts for the impending solemn act of Sacrifice. The intelligent Christian, however, cannot hear the Preface without being reminded of

the public declaration of Christ's innocence made by Pilate, when he said to the enraged persecutors clamoring for the blood of our Lord: "Take Him you and crucify Him: for I find no cause in Him."[1] At this point, the Christian feels forced to exclaim: "Ah, Pilate, Pilate, thou hast pronounced Jesus innocent, and soon after hast declared that thou hadst the power to either crucify Him, or release Him; why hast thou, then, failed to use it in behalf of His innocence as justice demanded and as was required of thy office?"

The answer to this comes to the Christian from on high. It is that God permitted Pilate, through weakness and cowardice, to give way to the consummate malice of the high priests, and to the fickleness of the people suborned by them. In other words, both Pilate and the enemies of Jesus were, through God's permission, the instruments to accomplish the work of human redemption. From this, the Christian learns why it is that Jesus Christ called His Passion the Chalice which His Heavenly Father had offered Him to drink. He also learns that it is expected of His followers, that they shall imitate

[1] St. John, XIX, 6.

His conduct in all adversities and trials, and that, having suffered with Him, they may also rejoice with Him; for, said the Holy Ghost through the Royal Psalmist, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."[1]

These sentiments seem hard to weak nature, when the Christian hears the Priest conclude the Preface with the heavenly hymn: *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,* which the choir takes up and sings for the people. The words of this hymn, especially when rendered musically by the choir, recall to the Christian's mind the episode which had occurred only a short time before at the gates and in the streets of Jerusalem. The people of Jerusalem gave Jesus a most solemn reception amidst repeated *Hosannas,* only to turn against Him and cry out for His death, and thus suddenly change the *Hosannas* into *crucify Him, crucify Him.* Their crime was deicide; but they courted the responsibility of answering for His death, saying: "His blood be upon us, and upon our children."[2] The complete destruction of Jerusalem sixty years afterwards, the horrible slaughter of over one million of her inhabitants, the total loss of their

[1] Ps. CXXV, 5.

[2] St. Matthew, XXVII, 25.

nationality, their condition of wandering exiles, are the effect of the curse they called upon themselves and their posterity through their thirst for the Blood of Jesus.

After the Sanctus, the Christian notices that the Priest lifts his hands and eyes to heaven, and then prays in a profoundly inclined posture. By this ceremony, the Christian is reminded of Jesus condemned to death. After a few moments of humble prayer, the Priest is seen making signs of the cross over the Chalice and the host. This is to represent the enemies of Jesus hastening to carry out His sentence of death. The wild animals let loose in the amphitheatre—rushing upon the Christian martyrs, and tearing them for a repast, give a faint idea of the manner in which Jesus was set upon by His enemies.

They were more eager than the Numean lions, and more cruel. He must die slowly,—and on the object of scorn,—the cross. This symbol of degradation, which was fifteen feet long, was laid on His shoulders. The immense population of Jerusalem went out to see Him ; the multitudes of strangers that had come for the Easter Solemnity saw Him,—only to

scorn Him ; for the death of the cross was considered the most infamous upon earth, it was inflicted only on the greatest criminals of the lowest class of society. Besides the shame which Jesus most keenly felt in His most tender Heart, He endured most horrible torments. What must have they been ! His Body was all bruised and mangled by the scourging, greatly weakened by the copious loss of blood, and His Head pierced to its very brain by the sharp stiff thorns ! It was in this condition that Jesus was loaded with a heavy cross, and forced to carry it on a long, steep and rugged road ; not at a slow pace or with leave occasionally to rest Himself, but compelled by kicks and strokes to hurry on. The Christian almost sinks under the pressure of grief and compassion at seeing Jesus proceeding like a meek lamb, soaked in perspiration and blood, exhausted by fatigue, and overwhelmed by agonizing pains from His gaping wounds. He went on silently and pantingly, pressed down by the weight of the cross, repeatedly falling under it, and, hence, receiving fresh and increased torments from the breaking open of the wounds. He proceeded on surrounded by enemies as a lamb by hungry wolves.

They laughed at Him; they insulted Him; they struck Him. They dragged Him up and onward with ropes. For a little while they relieved Him of the cross, but only for fear that He might die on the way; and in order to keep Him alive for still greater torments and so quench their thirst with the last drop of His Blood; they would not let Him perish as He ascended the sorrowful way.

Here the Christian pauses to consider the whitest innocence that suffers for his sins and for the sins of all men to draw us all to penance,—for penance is the second and last plank of salvation.

ELEVENTH INSTRUCTION.

The parts of the Mass we considered in our last Instruction impressed our minds and hearts. Their importance may be judged by their effects.

The first thing to arrest our attention was the request of the Priest to the people, to be united to him by prayer through the rest of the Mass. Next, we noticed that from the moment the Priest made that request, *Orate, fratres*—Brethren, pray, he

abstains from facing the people till after the consummation of the Holy Sacrifice, in order to keep himself absorbed in prayer, closeted with God. We mentioned the fact that the deep silence then existing in Church, is only broken by the recitation or singing of the *Preface*, the *Sanctus*, and *Hosanna*, to invite the people to lift up their hearts to God and dispose themselves for the impending adorable act of the Sacrifice.

We remarked that the *Preface* is a reminder of the public declaration made by Pilate of Christ's innocence, and of his failure to protect it. In this last fact we saw God's permission that both Pilate and the enemies of Jesus should become the instruments of the accomplishment of human redemption; and we also perceive that it is God's will that we should follow Jesus in suffering, in order to follow Him in joy.

In the thrice repeated *Sanctus* and in the *Hosanna*, we cherished the comfort held out to us that joy shall follow our trials if we endure them after the manner of Jesus. This same heavenly hymn, especially when rendered musically by the Choir, also reminded us first of the acclamations of honor

and love from the people of Jerusalem upon the occasion of the solemn reception given to Jesus; then of their shouts for His death a few days after. This observation recalled to our mind the terrible punishment with which deicides were visited.

Afterwards, we noticed the Priest lifted his hands and eyes to Heaven, and prayed in a profoundly inclined posture. In this ceremony we saw a reminder of Jesus' condemnation to death. Finally, in the signs of the cross over the Chalice and the host, we saw represented the hastening of the Jews to carry out the sentence of death passed on Jesus. To form some approximate idea of the manner with which they set upon Him, we compared His enemies to the wild animals let loose in the amphitheatre upon the Christian Martyrs. With this illustration before our mind, we imagined that we saw the enemies of Jesus hurriedly make a cross, and lay it on His shoulders, and force Him to carry it on the long and hard road, without granting Him any rest, or sparing Him the refined cruelties of burning hatred.

In seeing the highest innocence suffer, we paused and concluded that Jesus submitted to sufferings

that He might draw us to submit to penance, and, by this second and last plank of salvation, make us all *His* in time and eternity. This appeal to give ourselves to penance and to surrender our whole being to Jesus, will be repeated to-day in all its force in the following parts of the Mass. They form the tremendous climax of the Holy Sacrifice.

While we were following Jesus on the way to Mount Calvary, our hearts were steeped in anguish at the sight of His prolonged and intensely increasing sufferings from the scourges, the crown of thorns, the carriage of the heavy cross on His mangled and bleeding shoulders, and the many other brutal acts of violence inflicted on Him; but we did not sufficiently consider that the sins of the past, present and future man, were the real authors of His torments; that it was, therefore, the sins of all men, that He was carrying, and that it was the punishment due to their guilt that He was undergoing. All this had been clearly foreseen by the Prophet Isaias, when he said of Christ: "Surely, He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows .... He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was

upon Him."[1] And St. Peter said: "He bore our sins in His body upon the tree."[2]

Even more than at the sufferings of Jesus, the Christian looks at His Heart all aglow with desire to heal the souls of all men from the stains of their sins. The Christian sees His desire to secure the divine forgiveness of their guilt; His passion to unite all in the same bonds of faith, hope and charity; and to form one Universal Church out of all the living upon earth, of the souls suffering in Purgatory, and of the Saints in Heaven, that all may abundantly partake of the benefit of Redemption. Christ suffered, then, that the living upon earth may share in grace and salvation, the souls detained in Purgatory, receive relief and deliverance, and the Saints of Heaven enjoy the bliss of glory. This is the substance of what the Priest is asking while absorbed in prayer at *the Mementos* and at the *Communicantes*. But the intelligent Christian knows that in order to share in the fruit of the Passion of Jesus, the men living upon earth have first to become partakers of His Passion by a life of penance through sincere sorrow for past sins,

[1] LIII, 4, 5. [2] I. 11, 24.

perseverance in fighting against temptations and in overcoming all the difficulties found in the way of duty and virtue; for, says St. Paul to the Corinthians: "As you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you be also of the consolation."[1] The instructed Christian understands that as by his sins every man was an instrument of the Passion of Jesus, so every man is required to be partaker of it by patiently submitting to trials and tribulations, and by constantly obeying the law of God, cost what it may. Supported by this view, every man believes and realizes that he is one of the enemies of Jesus who set upon Him, and inflicted on Him all the torments that He has endured.

Hence, every man acknowledges that he is one of His cruel executioners, and, therefore, when he sees the Priest extend both hands over the Chalice and the host, he counts himself as one of those who rudely seized Jesus, stripped Him naked, and, in taking off His clothes, tore off some of the bruised flesh adhering to them. While enduring all this, Jesus opened not His mouth to complain, but was ready for more torments. What these are to be, the

[1] II, 1, 7.

Christian sees represented in the three signs of the cross made over the host, and in the one sign only over the Chalice. They indicate to him that Jesus is to be fastened on the cross with large nails driven through His hands and feet! Most humiliating as the ignominy and most excruciating as the pains from past sufferings were, the Christian knows that the Crucifixion exceeded them both beyond human conception. In fact, no other punishment was ever known to have been so infamous as *crucifixion;* for the Jews held as accursed of God those who hanged on a tree;[1] and the Romans called it the slaves' punishment, and only inflicted it on such of them as were guilty of most heinous crimes. As for intensity of torments, the ancients considered the punishment by any number of fires preferable to that of crucifixion.

Conscious of the part he has taken in bringing that infamy on Jesus and in crucifying Him, the Christian grieves over that scene of horror, because he himself is an assistant in it through his sins. It is with these sentiments that the Christian beholds *the Crucifixion of Jesus*, and sees that the right arm

[1] Deut., XXI, 23.

is first stretched out on the beam of the cross, and a large and sharp nail is driven into the palm of the hand, and riveted on the other side of the wood. By this operation, the nerves, veins and arteries are severed, little bones fractured, and some of the flesh torn off and imbedded with the nail inside of the wood. Then, the executioners seize the left hand; but, as the nerves have been contracted by the nailing of the right hand, it cannot be pulled to the spot marked for it, so the murderers violently pull it and force the nail through the hand.

The wound in the right hand is widened, the shoulders are dislocated, and more nerves, veins and arteries are ruptured. If Jesus did not succumb under these most agonizing torments, it is only because of His immense love for us. His passion for suffering for us was infinite. Finally, the executioners grasped His feet, and as, because of the contraction of His limbs, they cannot reach the place intended for their nailing, so they tie them with ropes, violently pull them down, and nail them together. In this process, they tear off some of the flesh, burst open the veins, sever the arteries, and cause the blood to gush and mingle with that already

streaming from the head, the hands, and the countless gaping wounds.

Here, the Christian pauses to consider the execrable work done by sin, and the immense sacrifice made by Jesus to reclaim and save the sinner.

TWELFTH INSTRUCTION.

In our last Instruction, we explained the meaning of two parts of the Mass, namely, that of the Priest's extending his hands over the host and the Chalice, and of his making three signs of the cross over the host and one sign over the Chalice. The first part had already been touched upon in the preceding Instruction and explained as representing the seizure of Jesus, the laying of a heavy cross on His mangled and bleeding shoulders, and His painful carrying it to Mount Calvary.

Last Sunday, we reverted to the same part, and said that it also represents all men seizing Jesus, and making themselves the real authors of all His torments through the commission of their sins. We considered how all men were truly His enemies and

cruel executioners, and proved that He was carrying their sins and undergoing the punishment due to their guilt.

The intended effect from those most wholesome considerations was to impress us with the full malice of our sins, to arouse within us sincere sorrow for having committed them, and to induce us to resolve to give ourselves to Jesus as a mark of our profound appreciation of His infinite desire to suffer in our stead, and sacrifice Himself in order to redeem and save us.

It is with these sentiments that we passed on to consider the meaning of the second part, which brought us to stand, not as mere witnesses, but as the real actors in the horrible scene of the nailing of Jesus to the cross.

To-day, we have reached that part of the Mass which is the climax of the Holy Sacrifice, and represents the lifting of the cross, with Jesus on it, and the streaming of Blood from His many wounds.

The part of the Mass which we are now about to consider is *the Consecration.* This is the most essential act of the Holy Sacrifice. Well instructed people give evidence of their faith in it by following

in spirit their representative, the server of the Mass, in his drawing near and kneeling a little behind the Priest, and gently lifting the hem of his chasuble, to indicate the union of Priest and people in the offering of the Sacrifice. Meanwhile, they are prostrate on their bended knees with bowed head, hands held reverently, and faces bearing the expression of sorrow mingled with joy in the great mystery of Redemption about to be accomplished. The Priest alone has the power to accomplish it; but, to use it in the best fitting manner, and to acknowledge that he has received it from on High at his ordination, he makes three signs of the cross over the host and the chalice conjointly, and one sign over the host and another over the chalice separately. By this he indicates the commemoration and the fruit of the Passion of our Lord. At the same time, in a whispering voice he supplicates the Most High, saying: "Which oblation do Thou, O God, vouchsafe to bless, approve, ratify and accept; that it may be made for us the Body and Blood of Thy most beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

The words of this prayer recall to the Christian's mind what Jesus did and said immediately before

and after His Last Supper: He took with Him the twelve Disciples whom He had schooled in Heavenly doctrine and virtue, washed their feet, to teach them the necessity of humility and purity, reproved infidelity, predicted His own death on a cross, foretold persecutions and torments to His followers on His account, promised them a great recompense for fidelity to Him, pledged His word to be ever-abiding with them; then He gave them His own flesh to eat and His own Blood to drink; told them the motives that had prompted Him to give Himself to them as food and drink. And finally, He raised them to the sublime dignity of the New Priesthood. He conferred on them the power of doing what He had just done, that of changing the substance of the bread into the substance of His Body, and the substance of the wine into the substance of His Blood.

Accordingly, the Priest is now about to do in his own behalf and in that of all the faithful, and of those present in particular, what Jesus did for His Twelve at the Last Supper. In the exercise of his sacerdotal power grounded upon the words of Jesus Christ to His disciples, he says: "Do this in

remembrance of me;"[1] he takes the unconsecrated host between the thumb and forefinger of both hands, assumes a profoundly inclined posture, and pronounces the words of Jesus Christ, saying over the bread (host): *this is My Body*: then taking the Chalice in his hands, he says over the wine: *this is My Blood.* These words have the same creative power when spoken by the Priest as when they were uttered by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper. The moment they are uttered by the Priest in the Mass, the substances of the bread and of the wine are changed into the substances of the Body and of the Blood of Jesus Christ, and all that is left of the bread and of the wine is their outward appearance. Their real substances have given way to other real substances, namely to the true Body and to the Blood of Jesus Christ.

The instructed Christian is lost in admiration as he considers the marvellous power granted to the Priests of the New Law. Making his own the words of the Following of Christ,[2] he exclaims: "A great mystery! and great is the dignity of Priests, to whom a power is granted, such as has

[1] St. Luke, XXII, 19. [2] Lib, IV. 5.

not been conferred upon Angels. For Priests alone duly ordained in the Church, have the power of celebrating and consecrating the Body of Christ. The Priest is, indeed, the Minister of God, using the word of God in virtue of the order and institution of God, but God is therein the principal Actor, the invisible Worker."

THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST RAISED ON HIGH.

The moment the Consecration is made, the real presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ on the Altar is testified to by acts of adoration from both the Priest and the people. That most august moment is heralded by the ringing of a little bell or by the striking of a gong; and still more significantly by the kneeling of the Priest and by his raising the Sacred Host above his head, and holding his eyes riveted on it. He does the same thing with the Most precious Blood in the Chalice.

Besides being intended as a call upon the people to make a public act of faith in the Real presence of our Lord on the Altar, and adore Him, the

Elevation of His Body and Blood represents the raising up of the cross with Jesus on it. But, beyond pondering over the new excruciating sufferings caused to Him by the jolting of the heavy cross, as its base fell into the deep ditch, and beyond grieving over the blasphemies uttered and insults hurled at Him by His savage enemies, the Christian looks upon the Cross as the Altar of the New Covenant, and upon Jesus as the Victim for the Sacrifice. A circumstance which strikes the Christian is that the Evangelists St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John, are unanimous in stating that Jesus was crucified in a place called *Calvary*, which name means *Man's Skull*. This circumstance seems to show that the importance and effects of the crucifixion of Jesus were in a great measure woven with the special place of His death. In fact, it was on this mount that Abel, Noe, Melchisedech, Abraham, Josue, David, Solomon and all the Priests descendant from Aaron, offered sacrifices to God; each of which figured one of the characteristic qualities of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Hence, by stating that He was crucified on Mount Calvary, the four Evangelists seemed to have wished to indicate that the

ancient sacrifices offered so frequently and solemnly, and by men of eminent sanctity on that very same mount, were figures of the great, sublime, and most august Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And that they derived their efficacy from it, that they were acceptable to God in consideration of it, that by His having been the last in coming to sacrifice on that same mount, Jesus Christ had substituted His sacrifice for theirs, and had thereby abolished them. In the crucifixion all the ancient figures were realized in Him, all the prophecies verified in Him, and the whole of mankind had henceforth to look up to Mount Calvary for help and salvation.

And since Calvary means *man's skull*, whose skull was it? *Adam's.* A sacred interpreter of accepted authority says, that to secure Adam's bones and skull from the destructive waters of the deluge, Noah carefully placed them in the Ark, and, after the deluge, buried them on Calvary.[1] On Calvary, then, were lying the remains of the first parent of mankind,—of the first clay shaped by the hand of God. Several of the early Fathers corroborate this

[1] Corn. a Lapide in St. Matth. Cap. XXVII, vers. 33.

opinion. Among others, Tertullian, who flourished close to the Apostles' time, says: "Here, on Mount Calvary, where the first man was buried, Jesus Christ suffers, and with His Blood moistens the earth, that, from the touch of It, the ashes of old Adam may be purified. When, therefore, the Christian notices the form of a human skull at the foot of a crucifix, he is reminded that Jesus Christ was crucified on the spot where Adam's body was buried; and will say with St. Paul, that "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."[1] "Truly," says the great Bishop of Carthage, St. Augustine, "it is not without strong reason that we believe that the Divine Physician was lifted on a cross on the very spot where wretched infirm man was lying; for it was but just and proper that the divine mercy should have lowered itself on the man who by pride had fallen and involved all mankind in his fall." Oh, how beautiful and consoling is the Mystery of the Crucifixion of Christ! By lifting their sinful hand to the forbidden fruit-tree, Adam and Eve fell from the state of innocence into sin and ruin; but, by

[1] 1 Cor. xv, 22.

stretching out His innocent hands on the tree of the cross, Jesus Christ atoned for their fall, and for that of all their posterity. He is the Divine Lamb immolated on the Altar of the Cross to take away the sins of the world. His arms are stretched out on the cross to show that He is languishing with love for all men, and with desire to gather them all in one even as the hen gathers her little ones under her wings, and as the good shepherd who gathers all his sheep in one fold, and lays down his life that they may be spared and live.

THIRTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

Last Sunday, we spoke of the most essential part of the Mass, the Consecration. In it, we considered the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament, and as the Sacrifice of the New Law. We were first taken in spirit to the large room in Jerusalem, where, on the evening before He suffered death, seated at table with His twelve disciples, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: "Take and eat; this is my Body:" then He took the cup of

wine, blessed it, and gave it to them, saying: "Drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood."[1]

From the consideration of this most marvellous miracle we passed on to meditate upon its perpetuation in His Church through the power conferred on His Priests to do what He had done at His Last Supper; for such, and none other, is the true and real meaning of His mandatory and qualifying words, "Do this in remembrance of me." By them He meant to say: as you, My chosen disciples, have seen Me take bread into My hands, you will take bread in the same way into your hands, and, as I lifted up My eyes towards heaven to give thanks to My Almighty Father, you are to do the same, and as I pronounced the words: "This is my Body," thereby changing the bread into My Body, you are to pronounce the same words, which proceeding from your lips are to have the same effect in virtue of the efficacy I now attach to them; and in like manner with respect to the wine, you are to do all you have just seen Me do, and pronounce the words you have heard Me pronounce; and in virtue of them, by the power I now attach to them, you will,

[1] St. Matthew, xxvi, 26-28.

as I have just done, convert the wine into My Blood, the Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins.[1] In accordance with this most marvelous power, we said, the Priest pronounces the words of Christ over the Altar bread and wine, and thereby converts their substances into the substances of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Here we mentioned the fact that this change, or conversion, becomes so real and thorough, that of the substances of the bread and of the wine nothing is left but their outward appearance, for they are replaced by the substances of the true and real Body and of the true and real Blood of Jesus Christ.

Having considered that the words of the Consecration infallibly and instantaneously cause the Holy Eucharist to exist as a Sacrament, we passed on to explain the meaning of the Elevation of the Sacred Host and of the Chalice, and said that it represents the uplifting of the cross with Jesus on it, and the streaming of His Blood from His many wounds. In this we saw the Sacrifice of the New Law, having a cross for its Altar, and Jesus Christ

[1] *Ibid.*

for its Victim. Here, we remarked that this Sacrifice is renewed in the Mass by the efficacious words of the Consecration, which cause the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ to lie mystically separated on the Altar, and thereby represent His Passion and Death. We mentioned that the principal object of this Sacrifice was the expiation for all men's sins. We quoted a sacred interpreter and a few of the earliest Fathers of the Church, saying that Jesus Christ was crucified on Mount Calvary, because Adam was buried there, and that it was but just and proper that expiation and redemption should have begun with him through whom "sin" had "entered into the world."[1] We finally concluded, that the commemoration of Jesus on the cross as suggested by the Elevation in the Mass, is a most powerful and pathetic appeal made to men to come to Him, and live for Him and in Him.

From the Consecration till after the Communion, the Altar is our Mount Calvary, and the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ really and truly present upon it are the same Divine Victim that was offered on the cross as expiatory Sacrifice for the sins of all men.

[1] Rom., v, 12.

The consideration of the meaning of the successive parts of the Mass is equivalent to the enriching ourselves with the treasures of grace that are hidden in it.

When the Elevation of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ is over, the Priest is seen with extended hands, absorbed in silent prayer. This represents Jesus Christ silently praying from the Cross, and patiently bearing His most excruciating torments. He hung on the cross from noon till three o'clock Friday. These three long hours of untold agony were hours of prayer, patience and love. He first entreated His Heavenly Father to show mercy and grant pardon to His enemies, saying: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[1] In the third chapter of Genesis, we read that, after their fall, being seized with great fear of the Lord, and ashamed of their nakedness, Adam and Eve hid themselves among the trees of Paradise. Commenting upon this passage, Origen, one of the earliest Fathers of the Church, says that it was a mysterious and prophetic instinct that prompted Adam to seek protection under the shade of a tree

[1] St. Luke, XXIII, 34.

from the gaze and anger of God. He had then a presentiment that the sinner was to seek and find the needed protection and security in the Cross. At once, after the Fall, God had made our first parents prophesy in act that the Tree was to solace and save them.

Now, that same protection and pardon which Jesus Christ asked of His Father from the Cross, is continually offered by Him from the Altar to the Priest and to the people. To convince us of this consoling truth, His beloved disciple, St. John, in the second chapter of his first Epistle, says: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just: and He is the propitition for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (1st and 2nd verses). Our Blessed Lord, Himself pledged His word for the truthfulness of this mystery of Divine mercy, when, at His Last Supper, in giving the Chalice to His disciples, He said: "Drink ye all of this, for this is My Blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins."[1] This accounts for the fact, that immediately after the

[1] St. Matthew, xxvi, 27, 28.

Elevation of the Body and of the Blood of Jesus Christ, the Priest assumes a suppliant posture and silently prays to God for himself and the people to accept the unspotted Host, the Holy Bread of eternal life, and the Chalice of everlasting salvation, to take them as He was graciously pleased to accept the gifts of His just servant Abel, the sacrifice of Abraham, and that of the High Priest Melchisedech.

The Christian who knows the great value of this most important part of the Mass, loves to be present at it and to summon his body to exterior adoration and the faculties of his soul to realize the presence of the Divine Victim. He also joins the Priest in supplicating the God of all mercies to accept it, and through the infinite merits of His Passion and Death, grant him to share in the fruit of Redemption, to obtain the pardon of his sins and the grace of sanctification and salvation. Having thus satisfied the yearning of his heart in his own behalf, the Christian remembers his relatives, friends and benefactors, who have passed away, and are soliciting for help and relief. The urgent wants of these he satisfies by joining the Priest in the commemoration of the dead.

THE MEMENTO.

Oh, how affecting and consoling is this spectacle of this loving union of the Church Militant with the Church Suffering! After having prayed for himself and the people, the Priest is seen absorbed in deep recollection. He brings to mind all the faithful departed, the souls suffering in Purgatory; he mentions several of them in particular, and in an especial manner the one or ones for whom the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered. Having made this commemoration of them, he supplicates the merciful God to accept the Sacrifice of His most beloved Son in satisfaction for their unforgiven venial sins or for their unatoned for guilt. What a spectacle of true love! The Priest, the people present, and the souls in Purgatory, all cry out with one and the same voice: *Father, forgive us*: Thou, O God, art the Father of Jesus and of us all; look then not at our unworthiness and sinfulness, but only at Thy own Heart, which is the Heart of a Father, and yield to our supplications by yielding to the supplications of Thy most beloved Son, who has suffered and died on a cross for the love of us. We entreat Thee with

His entreaties, and offer to Thee the infinite price of the Blood that He has shed for us. *Father*, in consideration of His merits, *forgive us.*

After this prayer for the souls detained in Purgatory, the Priest is heard saying: *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*—"Also to us sinners." These words amaze the intelligent good Christian, for they reveal to him the untiring solicitude of the Church in endeavoring to secure all possible fruit from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. As a most loving Mother, she sends up her entreaties to heaven, and places them before the throne of grace; then she descends into Purgatory.

Oh, what a distressing sight! The souls there detained are purified in a crucible of exceeding great sufferings. They send forth longings for relief and deliverance. Most deeply moved, the Church makes her own their prayers, aspirations and hopes, and uniting them with those of her other children yet living upon earth, she presents them before the merciful God and urges Him to grant that both may abundantly draw water from the living fountains of the Saviour, namely, from the merits of Jesus Christ, the Divine Victim newly slain upon the Altar with

the Sacrificial knife, *i. e.* the words of Consecration spoken by the Priest in the Mass.

Oh! how precious is the fruit that is derived from the Holy Sacrifice! The members of the Church suffering obtain either an immediate or earlier admission into the Church Triumphant, and the members of the Church Militant obtain the necessary graces to so live as to deserve to be numbered among the Saints, and finally to possess with them the eternal bliss of Heaven.

FOURTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

In our last Instruction, we dwelt upon the first three acts done by the Priest immediately after the Elevation. They were:—1. His silent praying with extended hands; 2. His deep recollection at the Commemoration of the Dead; 3. The words *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*—Also to us sinners. These revealed to us that our Lord Jesus Christ, really and truly present on the Altar, is the Advocate of all men with His Heavenly Father,—always pleading for their pardon, sanctification and salvation. This

truly consoling truth fills the mind. It is realized by the heart of every instructed, zealous Christian, especially when upon his knees before the Altar, from the time of the Consecration till after the Communion. For he knows that he has it then in his power to secure for himself and the faithful departed ineffable effects from the Divine Saviour's *infallible* pleadings; for this is the principal end of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

While present at it, every Christian is expected to do what a most wretched public sinner did for himself during the short time that he was present at the Sacrifice of the Cross,—draw close to its Divine Victim, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us consider his example, and learn to follow it.

We are still on Mount Calvary. There, we have already heard a sublime prayer; it was from Jesus who, from the cross, entreated His Heavenly Father to forgive His enemies. Another powerful prayer now reaches our ears; but this time, it is from a public sinner who, also from a cross, begs Jesus to pardon his crimes, and save his soul.

To understand and to appreciate the divine mercy which is here most humbly implored and promptly

granted, we must recall to mind the history of the Crucifixion. The fact that three crosses are seen raised on Mount Calvary, is sufficient to arrest our attention and urge us to discover why there should be two other crosses besides that of Jesus. The Christian well remembers that, after all possible cruelties had been inflicted on Jesus by His enemies, in their savage hatred against Him, they devised another torment, which was the last and worst. It consisted in crucifying two great criminals by His sides,[1] that the people might look upom Him as the greatest of malefactors, and His memory and name might be effaced from record.

But, as man's counsel cannot prevail against the Lord,[2] so, by satiating their mad hatred against Jesus, His enemies only became instruments to the accomplishment of God's designs; and, by their vile attempt at defaming Him, only brought about the fulfilment of a great prophecy.[3] Scorn has become glory;—and this very infamy is the tenderest exaltation of our Divine Saviour. The Christian looks upon the crosses as monuments testifying to

[1] St. Matthew, XXVII, 38. [2] Prov., XXI, 31.
[3] Isaias, LIII, 1; St. Mark, XV, 28.

the sublime passion of Jesus Christ for fallen humanity. The Christian knows that, while Jesus took upon Himself the sins of all men, and, of His own free will, submitted to all the direst torments, and to the ignominious death of the cross between two great malefactors, He remained the innocent beyond human conception,—for He chose to appear as the greatest criminal before men, that He might be their greatest, nay, only Benefactor. There is, then, a mystery in the three crosses which points out Jesus Christ as the Saviour of all men. Even the fact that He was between, has its meaning. He was the central point, as it were; and to that centre of Love He yearned to draw them to His most Sacred Heart for sanctification and salvation.

Humanly speaking, the fate of Jesus was irreparably sealed; for the high priests and the multitudes of the people were defying Him, mocking Him, blaspheming Him, and vomiting the vilest insults against Him. In that immense clamoring and outpouring of vituperations and blasphemies, some brutal voices came thundering close to the ears of the agonizing Jesus. They were from the two thieves crucified beside Him. They also were

venomous against Him; they joined the others in blaspheming Him. Turning towards Him, in a tone of savage fury, the thief on the left insulted Him saying: "No, thou art not the Messias, or thou wouldst save thyself and us." According to St. Jerome, no sooner was that blasphemy uttered, than, in the words of the Gospel, "the sun was darkened,[1] and the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent."[2] In the opinion of the said Holy Doctor of the Church, the sight of that sudden extraordinary revolution in nature, so affected the thief crucified on the right, that he, at once, believed in Jesus Christ, repented, begged pardon for his crimes, and implored the God-Man to save his soul. The Gospel assures us that his conversion was real, for, turning to his companion in crime and punishment, he rebuked him, saying: "Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation?[3] We wretches suffer the penalty of justice, but our punishment is only the due of our crimes. It is not so of Him who is

[1] St. Luke, XXIII, 45.

[2] St. Matthew, XXVII, 51.

[3] St. Luke, XXIII, 40.

crucified between us: He is innocent, and suffers with all patience."[1] Then, turning in deep humility towards Jesus, with imploring voice and sorrowful heart, he said to Him: "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom."[2] The Christian cannot but greatly admire this prayer; for he finds that by the rebuke administered to his obstinate companion for not fearing God, he showed that he already had this most precious gift—the holy fear of God, the beginning of wisdom, the pledge of eternal salvation, the maker of penitents, the halo of the just. Then, again, the good thief, whose name is said to be Dismas, is not content with possessing the holy fear of God; he endeavors to instil it into the heart of his companion. Hence, he rebukes him, instructs him, and warns him, that, having been his companion in crime and punishment, he may now also be his companion in penance. He was only a new convert; and yet he was already acting as an Apostle. He, therefore, offers a great lesson,—that man's zeal for the conversion of others is a sure sign of the sincerity of his own conversion.

[1] *Ibid.*, 41.

[2] *Ibid.*, 42.

The conversion of the good thief was perfect, as is proved by his words: "We receive the due reward of our deeds."[1] In these few words we have an act of true contrition, for they contain a public, humble and sorrowful confession of a sinful life.

Oh, how different the two thieves are from each other! By saying to the Lord: "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us,"[2] the thief on the left plainly showed that he was wishing for a miracle to free him from the cross, but not for the grace of pardon. He detested the penalty, but not his crimes; he smarted under the rigor of men's justice, but was not sorry for having offended God's goodness. He was anxious to live longer in the world, but thought nothing of his eternity.

The thief on the right offers a direct contrast. In fact, his words of rebuke to his companion and his prayer to Jesus point him out as a model penitent. He repines not, but takes his punishment as justly deserved. Hence, he bears it in all patience and resignation, that he may thus make some atonement for his crimes. He considers his penalty as nothing compared with what he deserves. He cares

[1] St. Luke, XXIII, 41. [2] *Ibid.*, 39.

not for the life of his body; all his anxiety is about his soul. He asks not to be spared, but fervently prays that his soul may be safe. But in whom does he trust for pardon and salvation? In Jesus Christ. He sees Him nailed to a cross; yet he calls upon Him as though He were sitting in the glory of Heaven. He beholds Him condemned to the death of the malefactors; yet he adores Him as the Lord of lords. He had never seen a miracle from Jesus; yet he believes in Him, hopes in Him, and loves Him. The priests, the ancients and the people pronounce Him guilty; he alone proclaims Him innocent and holy. All blaspheme Him; he alone praises Him. All accuse Him; he alone defends Him.

Behold the magnificent power of Jesus Christ,—the miraculous working of His grace! A man steeped in iniquity and malice is in an instant changed into a great penitent, a zealous evangelizer, a first martyr, a fervent confessor of the faith in Jesus Christ! His prayer was heard, and his conversion is rewarded; for, in great meekness, Jesus said to him: "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."[1] Oh precious words!

[1] St. Luke, XXIII, 43.

Oh, most consoling promise! Oh, most generous grant! They should be treasured up by all men, and made to sink deep into their heart.

Before the world, people are classified by sex, condition, trade, profession, art, and nationality. Here in church, you are of various conditions and temperaments and occupations; I, a priest, perform through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the most sublime of miracles,—but, before Jesus Christ lying Victim on the Altar, we are *all*,—priest and people,—all sinners. We are reminded of this great truth, and forcibly invited to acknowledge it by the first loud words spoken by the Priest after the Elevation, namely "*Nobis quoque peccatoribus*"—Also to us sinners,—and by the striking of his breast as he utters them.

To be true to ourselves, we should then excite our souls to contrition—resolve to secure pardon for our sins by having the most precious Blood of Jesus applied to our soul through the Sacrament of Penance, turn all our trials and afflictions into means of atonement; and to place our entire confidence in the Lord, Jesus Christ, saying with the good thief: *Lord, remember me.* Then it is, that with the grant of the pardon for our sins, He will comfort us in

affliction, assist us in want, protect us in danger, guide us to salvation, give us the paradise of His grace here, and the paradise of His glory hereafter—and thus keep His promise to everyone: *thou shalt be with me in Paradise.*

FIFTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

Of late we have almost unconsciously identified Mount Calvary with the Church in which we worship, for the obvious reason that the same Divine Victim which was offered on the cross, is also offered on the Altar. Concentrating our minds and hearts on Mount Calvary, we beheld Jesus plunged in an ocean of anguish, and we were overwhelmed with compassion for Him. As we traced the cause of His infinite sorrows to our sins, we grieved over them and repented. As we saw Him rise above His excruciating torments, forgetting Himself in His boundless love for mankind, we were astounded at such sublimely generous self-abnegation,—an abnegation only possible in a God who is love itself. We are forcibly reminded of this spectacle of love cruci-

fied, by the *Pater Noster*, the Lord's prayer, sung or recited by the Priest in the Mass, for its seven petitions are reminders of the seven words spoken by Jesus from the cross. The first two have already been mentioned and considered, namely that of pardon to all sinners, and that of Paradise promised and granted to the sincere convert. His third word is the sweetest; it relates to the Blessed Virgin Mary whom Jesus bequeathed to St. John as his mother, and in him, to all men,[1] that She may lend them Her powerful protection, and guide them on the way to sanctification and salvation. Of this word I may speak at some future time.

My present purpose is to show you the love of Jesus increasing in intensity and manifestation, in proportion as the moment of the consummation of His Sacrifice approached. We shall see this in His other words with which He complained of being forsaken by God,—manifested His thirst, and announced the consummation of His Sacrifice.

As in this we shall discover the immense love that Jesus bore to us; so we shall have to admit that, in justice, we must give all our love to Him.

[1] St. John, XIX, 26, 27.

With his eyes filled with blood and tears, His heart steeped in mortal sadness, and His divine face turned towards Heaven, Jesus gathered up what little strength there was yet in His exhausted Body, and with a loud voice, cried out to His Heavenly Father, saying: *Eli, Eli, lamma Sabacthani?* That is, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"[1] We know that these most memorable words were uttered by Him at about three o'clock in the afternoon of Friday; and, therefore, shortly before He died. But how could He speak words that imply abandonment by God? Our Patron Saint, Leo the Great, tells us that Jesus complained not of that abandonment, because He unites the Divine and the human natures in His Person in such an intimate manner that the one cannot be separated from the other; and as through His divine nature He cannot be separated from the other two Persons of the Blessed Trinity, namely, the Father and the Holy Ghost, so He could not complain of being abandoned by either, because, as God, this abandonment is absolutely impossible. Considered as man, His complaining of being abandoned by God, can-

[1] St. Matthew, xxvii, 46.

not, without blasphemy, be construed into an act of despair, because this would imply a sin in Him. How could He have despaired, Who, when dying shortly after, said in a loud voice: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.[1] The true meaning of His complaining of being abandoned by God must then be that which enfolds the mystery of His limitless love for men.

Those words were spoken before the high priests, the ancients and the multitudes of people, and could not but be familiar to them, because they form part of the XXIst psalm. St. Jerome says that, on the aforesaid occasion, from the height of the cross, Jesus recited that whole psalm, with which David, as a prophet, had minutely foretold and described the whole history of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Messias. Take and read the psalm, and you will find in it the detailed mention of the torments and affronts inflicted on Jesus, and which from Sunday to Sunday have formed the subject of our consideration. While dying at their hands, Jesus reminds His murderers of the prophecy concerning Him, and by this, even at that late hour,

[1] St. Luke, XXIII, 46.

He offers to them the opportunity and the means to recognize Him as the true Messias, and thus work out their conversion and salvation.

They must have heard His words, for the Evangelist says that Jesus uttered them "with a loud voice;" which circumstance shows that He wished them all to hear and profit by what He was saying to them. The instructed Christian knows that their iniquity and malice turned into an imaginary danger what Jesus had intended as a last plank to their salvation. But what they refused or failed to see and understand, is to us a strong argument for believing in Jesus Christ as our Divine Saviour, since in Him David's prophecy was verified to the very letter.

When, therefore, He complained of being abandoned by God, He said what was really true, and had been foretold. He was abandoned by God inasmuch as neither the divinity of His Heavenly Father, nor the divinity of the Holy Ghost, nor His own divinity, was lending Him assistance. In other words, His human nature was left all to itself; and, hence, at the mercy of His enemies,—a prey to their fury and hatred,—entirely exposed to all the

ignominies, to all the insults, to all the torments and horrors of death on the cross, without any assistance, without any comfort from the almighty power of God.

It was then not to complain to His Heavenly Father that Jesus said: "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" but it was, says St. Leo, to call our attention to the reason why He had abandoned Himself entirely into the hands of His savage enemies, and why He was doing nothing to protect Himself. He, therefore, meant to say to us: "I am thus abandoned, because I wear the habit of the sinner and carry the punishment of your sins, and am your true Saviour. I could have all the needed help from my Father, nay, from My own divine nature, for I am in Him as He is in Me;[1] but I will not have it, so that, without aid, I may suffer and die for you.

It must be remembered that Jesus Christ was on the cross in our stead; that, in our stead, He bore the weight of our sins; and, in our stead, He atoned for them. As, through sin, man had abandoned God; so, in order to redeem him and bring him back, Jesus Christ suffers Himself to be abandoned

[1] St. John, x, 38.

by God. Let us here reflect that, if for the mere appearance of being like you and me,—a sinner, Jesus complained of abandonment by God, how much should we not lament the misfortune of having committed sin. By it we have provoked God to abandon us.

Let us bear this in mind: by His having suffered the abandonment of God, Jesus pleaded with His Heavenly Father that, in view of His abandonment, we might not be abandoned. Consequently, though we have thousands of times deserved desertion by God, still, while we live, God never deserts us completely; He always leaves the way open for our return to Him; He always offers us the plank of penance; He never refuses us the grace of conversion; His Heart is always ready to receive us; His hand is always lifted to pardon us. But woe to us if we do not properly appreciate His immense mercy and love, for our neglect to return to Him is fraught with danger. While He will receive us at any time, even at the last moment of life, we run the great risk of dying without repenting and returning to Him. Alas! that a life spent in utter disregard for God, in violation of the duties incumbent upon the Chris-

tian, ends in forgetting everything about God and oneself, and in dying without repentance; with the ultimate result that God does not abandon him, but that he abandons God!

Our Blessed Saviour saw this great danger, and in His depthless love, He offered us the means to avert it. In His agony on the cross, He not only asked and obtained of His Heavenly Father that He might not abandon us; but He also procured for us the means by which we may not abandon God, nor forget ourselves. This He did by His fifth word from the cross: "I thirst."[1] Of this we shall speak on next Sunday.

SIXTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

Last Sunday, we said that the seven petitions of the *Pater Noster* (the Lord's prayer) sung or recited by the Priest in the Mass, are reminders of the seven words spoken by Jesus Christ from the cross. We have already seen that by the first four words, He has secured to us God's pardon,—promised us

[1] St. John, XIX, 18.

heaven,—given us His own Blessed Mother for our Mother, and obtained for us the signal grace that God may not abandon us.

In closing the Instruction on the fourth word, we remarked that while it is certain that in consideration of the abandonment which Jesus suffered from God, He will not abandon us, there is great danger that we may abandon Him by dying unconverted and unrepentant. Justly alarmed at this woeful danger, it consoled us to know that Jesus had anticipated, and, in His unique and immense love, had pleaded for us; nay, had provided us with the means to avert it; and that this means is found expressed in His fifth word from the cross: "I thirst." It is a word most consoling and stirring. Let us, then, enter in earnest upon the consideration of its highly important meaning.

In the 28th verse of the XIXth chapter of his Gospel, St. John has these words: "That the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said: I thirst." By this we are made to understand that, before He had said that word, all the prophecies concerning His life and death had been fulfilled; only one, namely, that which is recorded in the 22d verse of the

LXVIIIth psalm: "In my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink." It is, therefore, to call our attention to the fulfilment of this last prophecy, that the Evangelist marks the circumstance of the motive that induced Jesus in His dying moment, to cry out from the cross, "I thirst." It was that Holy Scripture might be fulfilled even in this last detail. In marking this circumstance, St. John has shown to us a picture full of consolation. It shows to our mind Jesus Christ who, while nailed to the cross, sunk in humiliation, and suffering most excruciating torments, turns the whole of His mind and heart to the prophecies and mysteries relating to the great end of Redemption, the eternal salvation of all men. Intense sufferings affect the whole of His Body; but He forgets them all, and, with a calm and clear mind, sees through all ages,—scans all the pages of Holy Scriptures,—finds the things relating to His Sacrifice. He disposes all the things that must bring about the realization of what had been figured and the fulfilment of all that had been foretold. And thus He consummates the great offering of Himself, which was to have, till the end of time, the unerring power to sanctify and save the world.

His ignominies are exceeding great; but they neither dim His mind nor weigh upon His Heart; for He still thinks of us,—He still loves us, and thus shows that He is our merciful God, our loving Father and Saviour. This truth is found forcibly expressed in the 1st verse of the XIIIth chapter of St. John's Gospel: "Having loved His own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

What greater proof could He give of His vast love for us than to have, of His own free will, taken upon Himself the torments that were due to us? We were the real sinners; but He took our sins upon Himself, and, making Himself the sinner of all sinners, offered His innocent Body as the victim for man, to propitiate the justice of God for him. When, therefore, we hear this Redeemer cry out from the cross: "I thirst," we come to know how He suffered, a horrible and burning thirst caused by the enormous loss of blood,—the utter exhaustion of His strength from the many wounds received,—from the carrying of the heavy cross on the steep road to Mount Calvary, and from the exceeding pains and anguish of the crown of thorns and the nailing to the cross. We now understand

how His mouth and tongue, the only members which were not wounded, had also their torment,—how, therefore, He, who had taken our sins upon Himself became a victim for the sins of all in all parts of His Body. Hence, He was a perfect victim, the veritable man of sorrows.

In the quoted chapter, St. John tells us that at the foot of the cross "there was a vessel set there full of vinegar;" and when they heard Jesus complain of thirst, one of the executioners "took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink,[1] and Jesus approached His parched lips to it."[2] Thus the prophecy was fulfilled to the letter: "In my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink." "See!" exclaims St. Augustine, "how the God of love who supplies men with the comfort of fresh water and sweet honey, receives from them gall for food, and vinegar for drink!" "But," remarks St. Ambrose, "it was not only to fulfil a prophecy that Jesus took that vinegar; but also to accomplish a mystery of His most loving Heart. As He, holiness and innocence themselves, could not take upon Himself our vices and inordi-

[1] St. Matthew, xxvii, 48. [2] St. John, xix, 30.

nate passions; He took the vinegar of their deadly effects,—He tasted their bitterness in order to offer us a remedy to correct them, and thus change their root of evil into a germ of virtue and sanctity.

By manifesting His thirst, He meant not only to point out that special physical torment, but to emphasize it as the symbol of His ardent thirst for our salvation, of His yearnings to see all men to attain to everlasting happiness. We may, then, say that this intense passion tormented His Heart, as the physical thirst tormented the whole interior of His Body. His thirst is of the kind He meant when He asked the Samaritan woman at the well "to give Him a drink:"[1] it was not water that He wanted, but her faith; since it is this longing for the true faith in all men, that made Him come down upon earth to suffer and die for us. So, when He said from the cross, "I thirst," He expressed the desire that His enemies might be saved from spiritual death; He thirsted for their love.

Oh, what a contrast! While they hate Him, He loves them; while they vent their fury against Him,

[1] St. John, IV, 7.

He compassionates them; while they inflict the most cruel torments on Him and savagely condemn Him to death, He pleads for them and desires their salvation and happiness. The instructed Christian knows that they remained obstinate to the end; and, instead of quenching the thirst of His Heart all a-fire for their salvation, they embittered it with the vinegar and gall of their pride, cruelty, obstinacy and impenitence. But the Christian also knows that this same thirst of His Heart is constantly manifested by Him both from His throne of glory and from the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. He shows this intense thirst to all men, and, in a special manner to all Christians. In fact, He never ceases to manifest it, as though His happiness depended upon its being divided between Himself and us.

Hence, "I thirst," says He to the Christians separated from the Church, "I thirst" that you may have a faith grounded upon humility, simple, full, free from doubts, firm, constant and active; a faith with divine revelation for its foundation; with My Church for its interpreter and expounder; with the sacrifice of your private judgment for its condition, and holiness of life for its end. "I thirst" to see you

become members of My Church, which embraces the whole world, and, for this reason, is Catholic. "I thirst" that you may know and believe in My doctrine,—receive My Sacraments,—worship Me in the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, and thus partake with My real disciples of the fruits of Redemption.

"I thirst," says He to the bad Catholic, that thou shouldst bring thy life into harmony with thy faith, and, therefore, that all that thou dost should be just, good and holy. "I thirst" that thou shouldst break thy chains of sin,—be sincerely sorry for thy sinful life, and then come and seek My pardon in the tribunal of penance and mercy. "I thirst" to have thee forgiven and that thou leadest the life which saves the soul.

"I thirst," says He to all indifferent Catholics. Ye, My souls, whom with My power I have created to My image, regenerated in My wounds, purified with My blood, restored to life with My death: ye, My souls, regenerated with my baptism, pupils of My school, daughters of My Church, enriched with My graces, heirs of My glory, object of My mercy and of My love, why do ye persist in resisting My invitations and in running unto perdi-

tion? "I thirst" after your salvation. Oh, if you knew how painful it is to My heart to lose you! These are the loving words which He constantly addresses to us through inspirations to the heart, remorse of conscience, fears, trials and afflictions, to embitter any happiness we may seek in creatures, in earthly things.

His is a thirst of most ingenious mercy, and of a most burning love for us. Have we so far endeavored to quench it by offering to Him the refreshing drink of a life wholly conformable to our faith? Or have we offered to Him the bitter drink of an indifferent, or sinful life? Verily, says He, I bore with My enemies for giving Me vinegar to drink; but from thee, a Christian, My disciple and My friend;—from thee who hast sat at My table and eaten the sweetmeats with Me,[1] I expect the beverage of a life of virtue, of a life spent in the observance of My commandments, in the imitation of My example, in sincere sorrow for past sins, and in acts of atonement. Have I not schooled thee to thirst with Me? What else but a manifestation of thirst is the prayer that I have taught thee, the

[1] Ps. LIV, 14, 15.

Lord's prayer? Each of its seven petitions is a real manifestation of thirst of the soul. Why is it shown, except to have it quenched by Christ? The earnest Christian soul knows that it will be quenched, for Christ said: "Ask, and you shall receive."[1]

When we address God, and, with glorious liberty and child-like confidence, we call Him Father, Our Father, we manifest the thirst of our soul. Since He has raised us to the sublime dignity of being His children, we may during the whole of our lives possess the privilege of receiving from Him all the commiseration, help and love which it behooves Him as a Father to give us. How shall this thirst of our soul be quenched? By a life worthy of our sonship to God, and of the brotherhood of Christ.

When we petition God, saying: "Hallowed be Thy name," we express the thirst of our soul that God, who is so loving and generous, and has honored us with the most tender name of His children, may be honored and glorified by all. How shall we quench this thirst? By honoring God through our perseverance in the grace received in Baptism.

[1] St. John, xvi, 24.

When we say: "Thy kingdom come," we manifest the thirst of our soul, its yearning that we may never forget that earth is not our home, and that when our time to leave this valley of tears comes, we may be admitted into heaven, a kingdom of eternal joy and happiness. This thirst of our soul is real and constant. How are we to quench it? By being earnest in securing heaven, as the good thief crucified on the right side of Jesus was.

When we say: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we express the thirst that, while we live upon earth, we may only do what pleases God. We know that by pleasing Him in all our thoughts, feelings, words and actions, He is pleased with us, helps us, loves us, and finally will take us with Him to the glory of His kingdom. But, how are we to quench this thirst of our soul? By earnestly trying to find out what God wills that we should do, and then promptly to do it, and to do it well.

When we say: "Give us this day our daily bread," we manifest the thirst of our soul not only to receive from the infinite Bounty of God the things necessary for our daily temporal life, but first and principally the necessary daily sustenance and comfort for

our spiritual life. We crave for the daily bread that gives life and comfort to our soul. What is this daily bread, but the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist? Has not Jesus Christ said of Himself: "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven?"[1] This thirst of our soul is then only quenched by frequently approaching Holy Communion, and by keeping free from mortal sin in order to be worthy to receive Holy Communion daily,—if not sacramentally, that is really;—at least spiritually, that is by desire.

When we say: "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us," we manifest the thirst of our soul to have our sins forgiven that we may not be debarred from receiving God's graces and that we may not be shut out of Heaven. But how can we quench this thirst of our soul? Only by a sorrowful confession of our sins, and by sincerely forgiving the offences we may have received from our fellow-beings.

When we say: "Lead us not into temptation," we manifest the thirst of our soul that in consideration of our frailty, and of the many temptations with

[1] St. John, VI, 51.

which the devil, our own corrupt nature, and the allurements of the world beset us, God may, in His infinite mercy, protect us from being tempted above our strengths. Unless we quench this thirst, we shall fall and perhaps not rise again. How are we to quench this thirst of our soul? By being as much in earnest to secure God's protection as we are in asking for it. How is this done? Our Blessed Lord tells it, saying: "Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation."[1] Finally, when we say: "but deliver us from evil," we beg Christ for God's help in persevering in the struggle of life for the crown of immortality which can only be gained by violently combating our spiritual enemies. Now, how are we to quench this thirst of our soul? The Apostle St. Paul, the most valiant champion in the battles of the Lord, tells it in the VIth chapter of his Epistle to the Christians of Ephesus: "Take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice; and . . . in all things taking the shield of

[1] St. Matthew, XXVI, 41.

faith, with which you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation; and the sword of the spirit (which is the word of God). By all prayer and supplication praying at all times in the spirit: and in the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints."[1] By following these instructions of the Apostle we will manifest in ourselves the virtues and holiness of Jesus Christ, and will infallibly propitiate Him to show us the effect of His almighty power as our Advocate with His Heavenly Father.

Since, therefore, by every petition in the recitation of the Lord's prayer, our soul is crying out: "I thirst," and this thirst can only be quenched by obtaining what it thirsts for; we see that we are thirsting with the thirst of Jesus Christ: He thirsts after our sanctification and salvation; and our souls thirst after the attaining to sanctity in order to attain to salvation. Let us quench His thirst by a life of virtue, and He will quench our thirst by the grant of grace and guidance on the way to salvation. Once saved, we shall no longer thirst, but

[1] 13–19.

will be satiated with the fulness of the bliss and the glory of Jesus Christ, our Divine Saviour.

SEVENTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

The fifth word, "I thirst," uttered by Jesus Christ from the cross, was the subject of our last Instruction. In considering it, we learned that, in His dying moment, He turned the whole of His mind and heart to the supreme interests of mankind. That, forgetting, as it were, the excruciating pains of His Body, He was all intent on fulfilling everything that, in the long past ages, He, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, had announced through figures and foretold by prophecies concerning the promised human redemption. And that now, in the act of accomplishing it, He calls upon man to heed His offer of salvation, and to accept it. We said that this is what Jesus Christ principally meant when He cried out from the cross, saying: "I thirst." That He, therefore, craves that all men should earnestly work for their own sanctification and salvation by sincerely sorrowing for their past

sins, by securing pardon, and by faithfully observing the commandments, as these are the means by which they can profit by His Redemption. Hence, we remarked, it is the use of these means that makes the drink He asks of us, the only drink that can extinguish His thrist. From this we inferred that we must either offer Him this drink, or be His enemies, and incur the same perdition as His enemies of old.

Having touched upon this duty, we said that we have a great interest in complying with it, for we also suffer a thirst, a thirst which we daily manifest to God, because none but Him can quench it. It is the desire of our soul to obtain from Him what we ask in the *Pater Noster*,—the Our Father. In explaining the meanings of the several petitions contained in it, we found that to have God quench the thirst of our souls depends upon our quenching His thirst. That, therefore, if we offer to Jesus the drink of a life spent in virtue, we will quench His thirst for our sanctification and salvation; and He will, in return, quench our thirst by granting us His helps to enable us to sanctify and save our souls. This twofold happy result proves that the true

Christian life is, in the words of the Holy Ghost, "The wine that cherisheth God and men."[1]

All this will appear more manifest from the consideration of the two petitions of the Lord's prayer, namely, *Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie*—"Give us this day our daily bread," and *Sed libera nos a malo*—"But deliver us from evil;" and also from the consideration of the meaning of the breaking of the Sacred Host in three parts done by the Priest in the Mass.

In one of the Instructions, we have said and proved that, through the *Consecration* in the Mass, the *Holy Eucharist* is truly and really present on the Altar as a *Sacrament* and as a *Sacrifice*. We also said that both were instituted by our Lord for two great purposes: namely, that, as *a Sacrament*, it should be the heavenly food of our soul, to preserve and sustain its life; and that, as *a Sacrifice*, it should be a means by which sin may be expiated, and our Heavenly Father, whom our crimes have often grievously offended, may be turned from the severity of His justice to the exercise of His mercy. We are, then, to bear in mind two things: 1. That the

[1] Judges, IX, 13.

same Sacrifice which Jesus Christ offered on the cross for our sins, is offered in the Mass for the same end, namely, that we may partake of the fruits of His Passion and thereby satisfy God's justice for our sins: 2. That Jesus Christ is truly and really present on the Altar under the appearances of bread and wine, that we may receive Him, and, by receiving Him, our souls may be united to Him; and, through this most ineffable union, they may participate in His virtues and holiness.

Hence, the part of the Mass which commences with the *Pater Noster* is intended as a preparation for Holy Communion. Evidently, the Church desires to impress upon the people assisting at Mass that a Congregation which receives Holy Communion presents the edifying spectacle of a large family seated at the banquet of their Heavenly Father.

The devout Christian is well aware of this, and understands the reasons why the last petition *Sed libera nos a malo*—"but deliver us from evil," is not recited by the Priest, but by the Congregation through the Server of the Low Mass, and through the Choir at the High Mass. The evil from which every member of the Congregation is expected to

earnestly entreat God to be delivered, is that he may not, through his own fault, put any obstacle to the receiving of the favors asked in the Lord's prayer. The evil may refer either to the past, the present, or the future. The past evil consists in the guilt of mortal sin not yet forgiven; the present evil consists in the neglect of the proper means to overcome the danger of falling into mortal sin; and the future evil consists in neglecting to atone by works worthy of penance for the mortal sins already forgiven. It is from this threefold evil that we beg God to deliver us. In her great desire that this petition of the people may be heard, the Church ratifies it through the Priest, saying in a low voice: *Amen*— "Be it so." Nay, she joins them, and, in a more explicit manner, says through the Priest: "Deliver us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present and future." Then, also through the Priest, she invokes the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the two Princes of the Apostles, and of St. Andrew, and of all the saints, to obtain from the Lord peace in our days, and His merciful assistance, that we may be always free from sin, and secure from all disturbance.

By bearing in mind this explanation of the petition *sed libera nos a malo*—"but deliver us from evil," we shall more readily and clearly understand the highly important meaning of the preceding petition, *Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie* —"Give us this day our daily bread," namely, that as by this latter petition we ask in a special manner to be granted the daily bread of our soul, the bread which came down from Heaven, that is the true and real Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ through the receiving of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, so, by the petition *sed libera nos a malo*—"but deliver us from evil," we are instructed to beg God's assistance that we may keep from mortal sin, the greatest of evils, in order that we may be daily worthy of receiving the heavenly food in Holy Communion.

As it is the Lord's delight to be with the children of men;[1] so it should be in return, our delight to be with the Lord, the more so, because He only is our spiritual life, our hope and our salvation. Jesus Christ is daily saying to us from the Altar what in the most solemn moment of His life He said from

[1] Prov., VIII, 31.

the Last Supper table to His twelve disciples: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer."[1] Mark, that He went further than to manifest this desire, for He presently took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: "Take, and eat, this is My Body."

In conformity with His example, shortly after the *Pater Noster*, the Priest *holds the Sacred Host over the Chalice and breaks it in three parts.* In olden times, the Host was much larger, and one part of it was used to give Holy Communion to the people present. By receiving Holy Communion, Christians satisfy the craving of Jesus Christ, which is to be united to their souls, and to give them the pledge of His immense love here, and of eternal life hereafter.

Hence, the Christians who are, daily, worthy of Holy Communion, and receive it often, will attain to sanctity; and, upon their departing from this world and their appearing before the throne of grace, will, to their utter delight, be welcome by Jesus Christ with the endearing words: "Come, . . . possess ye the kingdom prepared for you from the founda-

[1] St. Luke, XXII, 15.

tion of the world."[1] He will then tell them the reason for His rejoicing with them, and for giving them the promised reward; for He will then say to them: because, "I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink,"[2] now I bid you come and receive a participation in My glory as a recompense for the love you have cherished for Me. You have overcome all difficulties and made all sorts of sacrifice to be worthy of Me, and have Me to dwell in your souls through Holy Communion; enter ye now into the joy of your Lord and Saviour. "Ye lived as My people, and now I will be your God. Here with Me, there shall be no more death, nor mourning, nor weeping, nor sorrow, for the former things have passed away, and here with Me all things are made new. Upon earth, ye have thirsted for Me; now, here, I will give ye freely of the fountain of the water of life."[3] Here, "You shall be inebriated with the plenty of My kingdom, and shall be made to drink of the torrent of My happiness."[4]

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[1] St. Matthew, xxv, 34.
[2] *Ibid.*, 35.
[3] Apoc., xxi, 3-6.
[4] Ps. xxxv, 9.

EIGHTEENTH INSTRUCTION.

Last Sunday, we dwelt again upon the one common thirst in Jesus Christ and in us for the sanctification and salvation of our soul. We said that Jesus Christ manifested His to all men when He cried out from the cross: "I thirst;" and that He daily manifests it from the Altar in the same strain of language as when He said to His twelve disciples at the Last Supper: "with desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer."[1]

As to our thirst, we said that we daily manifest it to God, specially by saying: *Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie*—"Give us this day our daily bread." In this connection, the remark suggested itself to our minds, that as He who has taught us to express the thirst of our souls by saying: "Give us this day our daily bread," is the same Jesus Christ who said to His disciples: "with desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you," (and, then, He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: "take ye, and eat; this is my body:"[2]) so He must have meant that we should

[1] St. Luke, XXII, 15. [2] St. Matthew, XXVI, 26.

ask to receive daily the same kind of bread which He gave to His twelve disciples. He broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying: "take ye, and eat; this is my body." To us, whom He desires to ask for our daily bread, He says: "Take ye, and eat;" for "I am the bread of life . . . He that eateth me, the same shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from Heaven . . . He that eateth this bread shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh for the life of the world."[1] Evidently, the thirst of Jesus Christ is His intense desire to be the food of our soul; therefore, the principal thirst of our soul cannot be any other than to feed on Him by receiving Him in Holy Communion.

After this explanation of the petition "Give us this day our daily bread," we entered upon the consideration of the petition made by the people in particular, namely *Sed libera nos a malo*—"But deliver us from evil," and found that the greatest evil consists in not being daily worthy of receiving Jesus Christ either spiritually, namely, through desire; or sacramentally, namely, through actual Communion.

[1] St. John, VI, 48–59.

To deter us from permitting ourselves to be guilty of this evil, we were told that we cannot be reckoned as friends of Jesus Christ if we do not quench His thirst by receiving Him often, and by being daily worthy of Him, that He may find it His delight to be with us. Finally, we spoke of the ineffable joys He holds for us in the kingdom of His glory, if we daily live in a manner worthy of Him, and receive Him often in Holy Communion.

The explanation of the next two parts of the Mass will still more convince us that our best hopes and gains in this life and in the next are founded upon our yielding to Jesus Christ.

Peace with God is what man's heart craves to possess. But the possession of it is the fruit and reward of a life modelled upon that of Jesus Christ, and, therefore, of a life spent in seeking and doing the things that are known to be pleasing to God, according to the declaration of our Blessed Lord: "He that sent Me is with Me, and He hath not left Me alone: for I do always the things that please Him."[1] By this He shows that He is the rule of our life. In fact, says He: "I am the way;"[2] "I

[1] St. John, VIII, 29. [2] *Ibid.*, XIV, 6.

have given you an example that, as I have done, . . . so you do also."[1] Hence, says St. Paul, "Whosoever shall follow this rule, peace (shall be) on them."[2]

It is to remind us of this truth that after the petition "But deliver us from evil," the Priest holds a particle of the Sacred Host over the Chalice, and either recites or sings the words conveying the best wish to the people present, saying: *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum*—"May the peace of the Lord always be with you." In the ages of strong faith and fervent piety, the people present answered: *Et cum spiritu tuo*—"And with thy spirit," and, at the same time, in token of unity and charity, the men gave the kiss of peace to the men, and women to the women. Though the Church has in her wisdom discontinued that practice, still the peace wished by the Priest in the Mass should prompt the people present to ask it of God, and to make an act of charity towards the neighbor, in compliance with the injunction of our Lord, saying: "If thou offer thy gift at the Altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the Altar, and go first to be recon-

[1] St. John, XIII, 15. [2] Gal., VI, 16.

ciled to thy brother; and, then coming, thou shalt offer thy gift."[1]

The peace which the Priest implores for the people, and the people should earnestly ask for, is the peace of the Lord, *Pax Domini*,—the great inheritance bequeathed to us from the cross by the Man-God; the peace of the soul which none but Him could give, the peace with God and with all fellow-men. No sooner has the Priest wished this peace to the people and received their response: *Et cum spiritu tuo*—"And with thy spirit," than he drops the particle of the Sacred Host into the Chalice, to represent, as it were, the signing of the treaty of peace with God and all men. As in the Old Law, the covenants between God and His people were ratified and sealed with a victim's blood, so the Priest ratifies and seals the union and peace of the faithful among themselves and with God in the Blood of Jesus Christ, in the blood of the eternal covenant. The sealing of this precious union is principally effected upon earth through Holy Communion. Speaking again of the breaking of the Sacred Host over the Chalice, I wish to call your

[1] St. Matthew, v, 23, 24.

attention to the fact that it represents *Jesus dying on the cross;* and that the dropping of a particle of the Sacred Host into the Chalice represents *the soul of Jesus Christ descending into Limbo.*

The representation of *Jesus Christ dying* reminds the instructed Christian of the last two words uttered by Him from the cross, namely, "*It is consummated,*"[1] and "*Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*"[2] The Evangelist St. John tells us, that "immediately after having taken the vinegar, Jesus said: '*It is consummated.*'" This is a most precious and consoling word; for, by it, He meant to say: "fear no more, all ye men, for I have cleared off all your debts,—paid for your ransom,—satisfied God's justice,—abolished the sentence of your condemnation,—stipulated your reconciliation with God,—secured the promise of your pardon,—laid open the treasury of My grace,—made certain your resurrection,—reopened Heaven and shown the way leading to it; I have provided for all things:" *It is consummated.* In other words; "I have spent My whole life to bring about your sanctification and salvation; and now, here on Calvary,

[1] St. John, XIX, 30. [2] St. Luke, XXIII, 46.

here on the cross, I have crowned the work begun in the manger of Bethlehem."

From the consideration that the whole life of Jesus Christ was but one continual, uninterrupted offering of Himself to work out the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of the elect, the earnest Christian learns that in order to profit by that offering, men are to devote their whole life to follow in His footsteps, and not to wait till death. That, therefore, as Jesus Christ lived and died to save us, so our whole life must be spent in attending to the salvation of ourselves. Old age, or the last sickness, is not the time to begin, but only the time to finish a true Christian life. We must, then, do for ourselves what Jesus Christ has done for us, that, at the hour of death, we also may be able to say : *It is consummated.*

After this word, Jesus Christ spoke another, which was the last before His death. In recording it, the Evangelist St. Luke describes the event thus : "And Jesus crying with a loud voice, said : '*Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*' And saying this, He gave up His ghost."[1] Mark, that, as

[1] St. Luke, XXIII, 46.

throughout all His life, so at the moment of His death, Jesus Christ calls God His Father, and thereby declares unto the last that He is the Son of God. Hence, His turning to Him in perfect confidence as one who is equal to Him, and therefore, meaning to say: "Father, the mission of saving mankind for which Thou hast given Me the soul for the body I assumed in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and for which Thou hast sent Me into the world, is accomplished; I now, therefore, return this soul to Thee: *Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*" As the spirit of Jesus Christ was His soul burning with desire to save all men, so by that last word He meant to say: "Father, I place in Thy arms, nay, in Thy bosom, the souls of all those that I have saved and will save." The souls of the fervent Christians, of those that love and are faithful to Jesus Christ, form His spirit, His mystical body, His soul, His life, which is all love: because He lives loving them, and loves them living in them. Hence, they were all recommended by Jesus Christ to the Father; as if He had said to Him: "My Father, the souls of the just belong to me. I am their Head, they are My members. I am their

Father, they are My children, My family. In placing, therefore, My soul in Thy hands, I also place theirs. As I cannot be separated from Thee, so do not suffer that they be separated from Me. They are My spirit and My life. I, therefore, recommend them to Thee as a thing My own; do, then, with them what Thou art now about doing with Me. Receive them with the same tenderness, embrace them with the same love: *Into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*"

Having said His last word, Jesus Christ died! He died; but His death, and the precious Blood He had shed, appeased heaven and obtained that its gates, hitherto shut to the descendants of Adam, should be opened. The souls of all the just that had died before this were confined to Limbo, a dark prison: but the Redeemer, in Whom they had believed and Whom they were most anxiously expecting, His soul united with His divinity descended into it to bring to them the happy tidings of their final deliverance. Their Redeemer is also our Redeemer; let us believe in Him and love Him through a life led in conformity with the Faith, that He may

find us in the state of grace, and we may find in Him the Saviour of our soul.

NINETEENTH INSTRUCTION.

In the last Instruction we explained the meanings of the breaking of the Sacred Host, and of the dropping of a particle of it into the Chalice. This part of the Mass led us to consider the principal circumstances immediately preceding the death of Jesus Christ on the cross; then we briefly described His death; and, finally, we spoke of His Soul descending into Limbo, to announce the longed-for deliverance to the souls of the just detained there.

We have now arrived at the *Agnus Dei*—"Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world," repeated twice with the expostulating word *Miserere nobis*—"Have mercy upon us," and repeated once more with the supplicating word *Dona nobis pacem*—"Give us peace."

This part of the Mass recalls to the mind of the Christian the various wonders which occurred at the moment of the death of Jesus, and, simultaneously,

the conversion of many of its spectators. In these wonders and conversions the instructed Christian sees represented the admirable effects of the death of Jesus Christ.

Let us, to-day, consider them in the wonders; and, next Sunday, in the conversions.

The figure of a lamb is seen in many churches, either in the centre of the front part of the altar, or on the tabernacle door. The adoption of this emblem dates back to the beginning of Christianity, for it is often found in the Catacombs over the crypts of the earliest martyrs. It has always been intended to represent the Son of God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who offered Himself as the innocent victim of propitiation for the sins of men. Nay, from the very beginning of mankind, the sacrifice of a lamb was adopted to represent the promised Redeemer who was to offer Himself in sacrifice for all. Thus, innocent Abel was wont to offer to God the best lambs in his flock, the faithful Abraham substituted a ram for his only son Isaac as a victim for the sacrifice on the mountain. In foretelling the Passion of Jesus Christ, the prophet Isaias said: "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a

lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth;"[1] and the prophet Jeremias introduces Jesus Christ as saying: "I was as a meek lamb, that is carried to be a victim."[2] Moses was directed by God to tell the people of Israel during their slavery in Egypt that every family should slay a yearling, male, spotless lamb, roast and eat its flesh, and sprinkle its blood over both of the side posts, and on the upper door-posts of their house that, upon seeing it, the Angel of the avenging God might pass on and spare the life of their first-born sons.[3]

To perpetuate the memory of that extraordinary event, a lamb was slain by every family, and its flesh roasted and eaten; and this lamb was then designated as the paschal lamb. For the same purpose, every morning and evening, a lamb was sacrificed by the priests in the Temple. The time of figures having finally closed with the coming of the reality, Jesus Christ became the victim of the only true and acceptable sacrifice. Holy Scripture bears testimony to the signal benefits obtained from on high through the sacrifices of lambs offered to

[1] LIII, 7. [2] XI, 19. [3] Exodus, XII.

God, for, He visibly and extraordinarily manifested His acceptance of them, blessed the people for whom they had been offered, and ceased punishing them for their sins. But, far greater are the evidences proving that Jesus Christ is the real Lamb who was once visibly slain on the cross, and is daily invisibly slain on the altars. These evidences had been foretold over five hundred years before by the prophet Aggeus, through whom God said: "yet one little while, and I will move the heaven and the earth."[1]

The Evangelists St. Matthew and St. Luke bear testimony to the fulfilment of that prophecy by stating that at the moment of the death of Jesus Christ, "the veil of the Temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent."[2] "There was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened."[3] "And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept, arose."[4] A circumstance to be noticed is that immediately after having stated the death of

[1] II, 7.
[2] St. Matthew, XXVII, 51.
[3] St. Luke, XXIII, 44.
[4] St. Matthew, XXVII, 52.

Jesus, St. Matthew uses the word "And behold."[1] Evidently, by it, he intends to point out the fact that the above mentioned wonders occurred at the very moment in which Jesus Christ breathed out His precious soul; and that they testified to His being really and truly God, and therefore, deserving acknowledgment and adoration as the Almighty Lord of the universe, the true Messias, the Saviour of the world; and that His Divinity remained *hypostatically* united to His dead Body. During the whole of His Passion and up to His death, Jesus had observed the most perfect submission, patience and silence. While He was alive, He uttered not a word in answer to the many vile insults and blasphemies from His embittered enemies. But the answer came with His death. Just as He died, He summoned heaven and earth to answer His vilifiers. The summon was no sooner given, than the reply came through the working of most stupendous wonders.

The high priest Caiphas had been the foremost of the blasphemers. You remember that, upon hearing Jesus say that He was the Son of God, "he rent

[1] *Ibid.*, 51.

his garments,—accused Jesus of blasphemy, and, for it, sentenced Him to death;"[1] accordingly, within a few hours' time, he was the principal advocate for the sentence of death. But lo! yonder in Jerusalem, Jesus is vindicated and avenged. There, with his own hands, the high priest had rent his garments to show his indignation against Jesus; but, there also, an invisible hand has now rent in two the veil of the Temple, where Caiphas was wont to solemnly officiate on the day of Pasch. The happening of this wonder was public, and recorded as such by the contemporary Jewish historian at Jerusalem, Josephus Flavius.

It was not a natural cause, but an invisible hand that rent in two the veil of the Temple, as it is evident from the fact that its height and width were immense; for it extended from the highest arch of the Temple down to the floor and across the whole spacious sanctuary, and was fastened with large ropes above and below it; it was made of strong material of several layers woven together, giving it an enormous thickness; for which reasons, no natural cause could rend it from top to bottom.

[1] St. Matthew, xxvi, 63-6; St. John, xix, 7.

The veil covered the sanctuary so completely, that it entirely concealed from the gaze of the people the Ark containing the two Tables of the Law and the miraculous Manna. By the rending of the veil, Jesus Christ showed that through the merit of His death, He had removed all the veils which had up to that time concealed the mysteries of human redemption; and that, henceforth, He was the teacher of all men, the propitiator, sanctifier and Saviour of all souls. But, if the veil of the Temple was rent in two, the veil of obstinacy, hardness and malice still continued to hide from the enemies of Jesus the truth that the era of figures was over, and the era of reality had finally superseded it. The enemies of Jesus would not, even then, recede from their refusal to acknowledge Him as the true Messias, the promised and long expected Redeemer. Hence, because they had lent a deaf ear to the many solemn testimonies which Jesus had given them of His being true God and the promised Saviour of mankind, He summoned nature to raise its mighty voice against them. And nature raised it through the tearing of the veil of the Temple, the quaking of the earth, the rending of the rocks, the bursting

open of graves, and the returning of the dead to life.

This wondrous rebuke with which Jesus Christ visited His enemies, ought to come home to sinners; for one far more severe is awaiting them if they neglect to return to their duty, which is to give themselves unreservedly to Jesus Christ by walking in His footsteps, cherishing His Church, detesting and confessing their sins, to recover the lost grace of God and to enter upon a new life, the life of constant obedience to the divine commandments, which is the only life that merits the salvation of the soul and leads it to the eternal reward.

To feel the importance, nay, the necessity of all this, Christians should guard against the danger of lending their presence at Mass just as if it were a mere commemoration of the sacrifice of the cross, as the Anglican Church holds. Our minds and hearts should be prompted by what Faith teaches concerning the Mass. They should realize that it is a true sacrifice, and that, from the time of Consecration to Communion, Jesus Christ is really and truly on the Altar as the divine victim of propitiation for our sins. He is there to receive from us the homage of

our adoration and supplication for pardon, and to give us grace for our sanctification, and help to bring about the salvation of our souls. Jesus Christ is truly and really lying on the Altar as an innocent Lamb slain for the love of us, and saying to all of us in the words of St. Peter: "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people.[1] I have made you such that you may manifest My holiness in your lives through the imitation of My virtues."[2] Hence, holiness should be the precious fruit of having been present at the Sacrifice of the Mass.

TWENTIETH INSTRUCTION.

Last Sunday's Instruction we disposed of the first part of the subject suggested by the *Agnus Dei* in the Mass. We considered the remarkable effects of the death of Jesus Christ in *the wonders* that occurred at that moment. We saw that though His enemies knew that the lambs offered in sacrifice by the Patriarchs and, after them, by the priests in the

[1] I, 11, 9. [2] *Ibid.*

Temple, were intended as a figure of the promised Messias; still they persistently refused to recognize Jesus Christ as the Redeemer. We, subsequently, described the extraordinary wonders that occurred at the moment of His death; and we pointed them out as evidences of His being the real Lamb for the only true and acceptable sacrifice. Finally, we looked upon those wonders as a rebuke to His enemies for not recognizing Him; and we concluded by saying that a far severer rebuke is in wait for sinners unless they recognize Him through a life of obedience to the divine commandments, for this is the only life that merits the salvation of the soul, and leads to the eternal reward.

To-day, we shall close the subject on hand by considering the admirable effects of the death of Jesus Christ in *the conversions* which also occurred at the moment of it.

A law enacted by God through Moses prescribed that the priests should offer spotless lambs behind the veil of the Temple, that the people might not see the sacrifice. But when Jesus Christ died, His power was manifested by causing an invisible hand to tear that veil asunder, and, thereby, bring the

whole sanctuary into full view of the people. This showed that, from that moment, He was the prefigured Lamb, the Lamb who alone reconciles men to God, and expiates for sin which had till then precluded the entrance into heaven. That, accordingly, as he caused the veil of the Temple to be rent in twain, He threw open to all men the gates of the eternal sanctuary of God.

The instructed Christian knows that the evening before the death of Jesus, His enemies had slain and eaten the paschal lamb, and observed all the ceremonies of the law relating to it; that, about eighteen hours after, they had immolated Jesus Christ, the real Lamb; that they had killed Him with the knife of their tongues; tortured Him with the crown of thorns upon His head, of nails into His hands and feet, and of vile insults and blasphemies; and that they had satisfied their savage thirst with His most precious blood. That, though they had witnessed the wonders that occurred at the very moment that their Victim was hanging immolated and dead upon the cross, they would not understand that the wonders were testifying to Jesus being truly the Son of God, the real Messias, the promised and

long expected Redeemer, *the Lamb of God* who had come into the world to offer Himself as victim for all men to take away their sins.

But, while His enemies recognized Him not, a most affecting and consoling scene took place in their very presence. There was before them an officer with a company of soldiers under him, who had been ordered there to carry out the sentence of Christ's death. Standing in front of the cross with their eyes riveted on Jesus,[1] they observed His perfect patience in torments, His generosity in forgiving, His meekness in listening, His affability in answering, His fervor in praying, His august authority in commanding, His superhuman voice in crying out, His fortitude and peace in dying, and His confidence in recommending His spirit to God as to His Father. Deeply affected by these circumstances, the officer and his soldiers were now so well disposed for supernatural light and divine grace that, the moment they noticed the death of Jesus, felt the earth quake under their feet, saw the sun shine again in all its splendor after the three long hours of dense darkness, they recognized that Jesus

[1] St. Mark, xv, 39.

was not a malefactor, and confessed that He was truly the Son of God.[1]

"Oh, what a grand spectacle!" cries out St. Leo, "to see that while the Jews are persistently refusing to recognize Him, though they have learned priests, scribes and ancients, and are adorers of the true God, and keepers of the promises of the Messiah, Roman soldiers, idolaters, steeped in error and vice, ignorant of the true God, of His mysteries, of Holy Scriptures and their testimonies of Him, instantly become professed converts, confess Jesus Christ as the promised Redeemer, and adore Him as God. Their act was both sincere and noble; for, St. Luke says that, upon "Seeing the things that were done, they returned from Mount Calvary striking their breasts, and saying: 'Truly He was the Son of God.'"[2] And mark, that they did and said that openly, and before the immense multitude of the enemies of Jesus.

When the Sacrifice of the Mass has proceeded to the *Agnus Dei*, the Priest is heard to recite it in a loud voice, and is seen *to strike his breast* at the same

[1] St. Matthew, xxvii, 54. [2] xxiii, 48.

time. The instructed Christian understands that this is done to invite the people present to join the Priest in acknowledging the real presence of Jesus Christ on the Altar, and to express to Him sincere sorrow for their sins, and to entreat Him to grant them the grace of conversion and pardon. Every Christian present at Mass should be animated, at least, by the same sentiments which the officer and his soldiers exhibited on Mount Calvary. They were pagans; but, the moment they realized that He who was hanging on the cross was truly the Son of God and the Saviour of mankind, they instantly acknowledged Him as such; and, by striking their breasts, they manifested sincere sorrow for the part they had taken in His death and for their past sinful lives; and they craved His pardon. They departed from the first Mass on Calvary converted, and, thus, bearing away the precious fruit of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. But the Christian knows that the same Jesus Christ is lying anew on the Altar—the same immolated Lamb of God; for it is to acknowledge this that both the Priest, and the people assisting at Mass, call upon Him as *Agnus Dei*—"The Lamb of God." The Christian knows that the

same Blood of Jesus Christ that He shed during His Passion is really present on the Altar; and that it is to entreat Him to apply it to their souls, that the Priest and the people bow down their heads and strike their breasts, saying: *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis*—"Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us." The Christian also knows that this entreaty is repeated by them to acknowledge both their unworthiness and the necessity of obtaining pardon for their sins.

Here the question may be asked: Do Priest and people really receive the application of the fruit of the precious Blood of Jesus Christ? Most undoubtedly; provided they have the right dispositions. If the Israelites had their first-born sons spared from death by the Angel of the avenging God as he passed through Egypt in the night; and if they obtained deliverance from Pharao's slavery, it was not in consideration for the spotless lamb's blood they had sprinkled on the upper door-posts of their house; but because that blood was a figure of the Blood of the Lamb of God, and derived its wonderful power from the merits of Jesus Christ, the real

Lamb who was expected to deliver all men from the slavery of sin and eternal death. Now, if a mere animal, a white lamb, because of its being the figure of the Lamb of God, was the means of securing those temporal blessings to the Israelites, what blessings will not Christians secure from the real Lamb, the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ? Christians have something much nearer and dearer to wish for: it is to have their souls spared eternal death, damnation. Christians know that there is a slavery infinitely worse than that of the Israelites in Egypt: namely, the slavery of sin, from which they should do all that lies in their power to secure deliverance. Now, the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, is really present in an immolated state on the Altar. He is on the Altar to do what St. John the Baptist said of Him as He was coming to him in the desert where he was surrounded by an immense multitude of people of all conditions in life: "Behold the lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sin of the world."[1]

It is that He may take away our sins, that at the *Agnus Dei*, in the Mass, we call Him the "Lamb of

[1] St. John, I, 29.

God," and entreat Him to "have mercy upon us." This He most infallibly does unto us, if we are sincere and earnest in our petition. Why should we not be sincere and earnest, when in His very presence we call upon Him, and strike our breasts? That striking of the breast, if it have any meaning at all, expresses sincere sorrow for our sins, and earnest intent to use the proper means to secure pardon for our guilt and eternal punishment, in order to be restored to the dignity of being God's loving children. Christians that possess these sentiments cannot leave Church after Mass without manifesting their conversion to God, being filled with fervor in everything pertaining to His love and service, and, thus, reproducing in themselves the conversion of the officer and his soldiers on their return from the first Mass on Mount Calvary. In going to Calvary, they were like ravenous wolves eager to slay the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ; but, on their return from Calvary, they were lambs: they breathed the meekness of the lamb instead of the ferocity of the wolf; they felt within themselves the charms of peace instead of the stormy violence of murderous appetite. This extraordinary and

radical change in them was brought about by their acknowledgment of Jesus Christ on the cross as true God and Saviour of mankind. It was this acknowledgment that produced true sorrow for their sins,—led them to conversion and to the receiving peace with themselves, with their fellow-beings, and with God.

The same, nay, even greater, are the blissful effects secured from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass by the Christians who realize the presence of Jesus Christ with His real Body and real Blood, victim on the Altar. Therefore, they adore Him, call upon Him, and earnestly entreat Him to have mercy upon them and take away their sins. In calling Him "Lamb of God," and, as it were, reminding Him that He became the "Lamb of God" in order to take away the sins of the world; they express their lively faith in Jesus Christ as the only Mediator between them and God; and in striking their breasts, as they address Him, saying: "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us," they show their firm belief that His Mediation can only be secured by sincere sorrow for their sins, and by the use of the means instituted by Him for the

granting of pardon and effecting their conversion. It is only upon the fulfilment of these conditions that Christians derive the precious fruits from the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. To fail to realize the presence of Jesus Christ on the Altar, is to fail to conceive the due sorrow for sin; and, therefore, to fail in being converted to God. Want of conversion ranks the Christian among the wicked, with whom, as says the Lord, "There is no peace."[1] Christians, sincerely converted, leave Church after Mass with the bliss of peace, "The peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding;"[2] for as Jesus Christ Who is the Lamb of God is also "the Prince of peace,"[3] so the Christians who acknowledge Him as such, adore Him and love Him as such, and convert their hearts in sorrow to Him, are by Him made partakers of His peace.

The *Agnus Dei*, in the Mass, is, then, a solemn call for true sorrow for sins, and for real conversion of the heart. The officer and his soldiers heeded it on Mount Calvary; Christians cannot be worthy of their profession, unless they also heed it whenever

[1] Isaias, LVII, 21.

[2] Phil., IV, 7.

[3] Isaias, IX, 6.

they assist at Mass, which is the reproduction of Calvary on the Altar.

TWENTY-FIRST INSTRUCTION.

The last two Sundays, we explained the meanings of the *Agnus Dei* repeated with the entreaty *Miserere nobis*, and once more with the supplication *Dona nobis pacem*. Our instruction was devoted to the consideration of the marvellous effects of the death of Jesus in *the wonders* that occurred at the moment of it; the other to the same effects in *the conversions* wrought at the same time.

The next part of the Mass claiming our attention is *the uncovering of the Chalice* and *the Communion*. As we shall see, they represent *the taking down of the Body of Jesus from the cross*, and *Its burial*.

From the things said in the last two Instructions on the paschal lamb, we have inferred that it was a figure of the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament and as a Sacrifice. Confining ourselves to the former, we know that the paschal lamb was a figure of the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament in as much as the flesh of

the lamb was eaten with unleavened bread.[1] As the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered by the Priest and by the people present to honor and glorify God, to thank Him for all the graces bestowed upon them, to satisfy God's justice for their sins, and to obtain the graces necessary to their spiritual and temporal well-being; so the Blessed Sacrament, namely the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, is on the Altar for the Priest's and people's Communion as the means instituted by Him to become united to Him. And so all worthy partakers become *one* in heart and soul, as they become one with Him.

The inclined posture taken by the Priest, the prayers he recites, and the striking of his breast as he utters words expressive of his unworthiness followed by others of confidence, tell what earnest preparation he makes that he may be as worthy as possible to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. In order to be in harmony with the Priest, the people present should, at least, do what the early Christians did at the risk of their very lives; they received Holy Communion every morning during Mass. It is owing to this practice that

[1] Exodus, XII.

they shone in all virtues, attained to great sanctity, and astounded the pagan world by their heroic fortitude in suffering martyrdom. Every Christian, present at Mass, who notices the Priest preparing for Holy Communion, should, at least, have the earnest desire of also receiving it.

The importance of this earnest desire is greatly enhanced by the remembrance of its allegorical meanings. When Jesus was dead, and His enemies had left Mount Calvary, His most sorrowful Mother, the disciple St. John, and Mary Magdalene, who were standing near the cross, were exceedingly anxious to take down His Body from it; but they knew not how. Their anxiety and perplexity were intensified by the fear that His enemies might secure His Body and vent their savage fury against It, for some one had already thrust a spear in His side, and drawn "blood and water."[1] But He who tenderly watches over the afflicted and the humble, and, in due time, comforts them and consoles them, provided for the honor of the dead Son and the afflicted Mother by inspiring worthy persons to take down the dead Body with all the reverence and devotion due to It.

[1] St. John, XIX, 34.

Thus, as the ignominies of Jesus had ended on the cross, so God disposed that His honors should begin from the cross. From this we should take courage to bear patiently our humiliations and trials, and never be wanting in confidence in God; for He will, sooner or later, turn them into exaltations and joys.

The four Evangelists (St. Matthew, XXVII, 57; St. Mark, XV, 43; St. Luke, XXIII, 50; St. John, XIX, 38) are unanimous in saying that on the very evening of Friday, God inspired a rich man of Arimathea, by name Joseph, to undertake the pious office of taking down the Body of Jesus from the cross. They inform us that this man was also a disciple of Jesus, though "secretly for fear of the Jews." And Pilate, understanding that He was now dead, "commanded that the Body should be delivered." Speaking of this Joseph, St. Luke says that he was "a good and just man."[1] By this circumstance, God shows that in choosing any one as instrument for the conferring of favors, He does not choose the wicked, nor the indifferent to their sacred

[1] XXIII, 50.

duties, nor such as are wanting in charity; but He chooses the fervent in faith and piety. Joseph of Arimathea was, therefore, a man according to the heart of God. True, up to that time, he had been afraid to openly profess himself a disciple of Christ: but, the moment his fidelity was put to the test, and he was called through inspiration to lend his services to the dead Body of Jesus, he knew no more fear, nay, he boldly went to Pilate to claim the Body of his Master. His request being granted, he at once went to buy a large new sheet in which to wrap the Body of Jesus, and, then, he proceeded to Mount Calvary. Meanwhile, God chose another good and just man to be his companion. This was Nicodemus, also a nobleman and a disciple of Jesus; the same one who, on a previous occasion, had gone at night time to see Jesus and to profess his faith in Him.[1] Yielding to an inspiration similar to that of Joseph, he went and bought an hundred pounds of myrrh mixed with aloes, and, then, he also went to Mount Calvary. Thus, these two good and just men had the high privilege and glory of removing the crown of thorns from the head of Jesus, and the

[1] St. John, III, 2.

nails from His hands and feet, of reverently lowering His Body from the cross, and gently placing It in the lap of His sorrowful Mother. The devotion and courage of Joseph of Arimathea and of Nicodemus are objects of holy envy to good Christians. Who would not do as much? True; we cannot render like services to the real Body of Jesus: but opportunities are never wanting to render them with equal merit to His mystical body,—namely, the poor. Jesus Christ Himself is warrant for this, for He said: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."[1] The Christian, therefore, who is charitable to the poor, according to his means, or, at least, through desire if he has no means to spare, is lending his services of mercy to Jesus Christ Himself, and will, in return, receive from Him the promised recompense in heaven.

From these allegorical meanings, suggested by *the uncovering of the Chalice* in the Mass, we shall pass to the consideration of *the Communion* of the Priest, which represents *the burial of the Body of Jesus.*

[1] St. Matthew, xxv, 40.

We said that after being taken down from the cross, *the Body of Jesus was placed in the lap of His sorrowful Mother.* She only was worthy of holding It, for She alone was immaculate, virgin and mother; and She alone had offered and consummated the sacrifice of Her heart while Her divine Son Jesus was offering and consummating the sacrifice of His life. Her grief on beholding Him in Her lap was tempered by Her conformity to His will, which was to suffer and to die for the salvation of all men. Her heroic resignation should be imitated in all our trials and afflictions, that it may "work our hope,"[1] and be accounted unto our merit.

Having made all the preparations for the burial, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus came and took the Body of Jesus from the lap of the sorrowful Mother. But where will they bury It? St. Matthew informs us that, on Mount Calvary, Joseph of Arimathea owned a private tomb, hewn out in a rock, in which no one had as yet been buried.[2] Pilgrims and travelers to the Holy Land find that this mausoleum, called the Holy Sepulchre, is now enclosed in the Church of the Resurrection. It has the form of a

[1] Rom., v, 4. [2] XXVII, 60.

little room in the hard rock; and it is somewhat over eight feet from floor to ceiling, a little over six feet long, and nearly sixteen feet wide. The entrance-door to it is on the east side, and measures four feet in height and a little more than two feet in width. The Body of Jesus was buried on the west-east side of the monument.

But, how was It buried? Nicodemus anointed It with the abundant myrrh and aloes he had purchased for this purpose; and Joseph of Arimathea wrapped It up in a new winding sheet. Thus prepared, they carried It and laid It in the Sepulchre, and rolled a stone to the door.[1]

From the circumstances connected with the burial of Jesus, the instructed Christian draws many wholesome lessons. He preeminently bears in mind that Jesus Christ came upon earth to teach all men the manner of living righteously: He first began to do by example what He was to enjoin by precept. Hence, the Christian finds that if meekness and humility were His cherished virtues, poverty was His indivisible companion till death. In fact, He was born poor in a stable, lived poor in a poor carpenter-shop

[1] St. John, xix, 38, etc.; St. Mark, xv, 46.

till the age of thirty. He preached the Gospel to the poor, and chose twelve poor fishermen for His Apostles. During His last three years He subsisted on donations from the poor; He died poor on a cross, and He was even stripped of His garments, and saw them divided among soldiers. True; His burial was magnificent, but only through the munificent liberality of two good men. The Christian, then, realizes that poverty is the characteristic badge of Jesus Christ.

In the preparations made for His burial, the winding sheet, the one hundred pounds of myrrh mixed with aloes, and the new sepulchre, sealed with a great entrance stone, the Christian sees represented the preparation he must make to turn his soul into a fitting sepulchre for the receiving of the Body of Jesus Christ through Holy Communion.

The Christian, therefore, learns that his soul must be made *new* by casting out all the filth of his mortal sins and his predominant venial sins through a sincere and sorrowful confession, firm purpose of amendment, and the absolution from the Priest. And that his soul must be *wrapped up in the winding sheet* of earnest reflection on its own unworthi-

ness, and on the infinite goodness of Jesus in vouchsafing to come to it, and that his soul must possess the perfume of virtues, especially of self-denial, mortification, lively faith, firm hope and ardent charity. Upon coming to his soul through Holy Communion, Jesus may be delighted with the precious odors of his virtues. Finally, after having received Holy Communion, his soul must roll to its entrance-door the great stone of strict watchfulness against wilful distractions, that it may, without hindrance, converse with its Divine Guest, Jesus; thank Him for the graces and favors brought to it; earnestly beg Him not to let any evil habit or occasion of sin steal Him from it, and grant it perseverance in fidelity to Him till the moment of resurrection from the life of grace to the life of glory.

TWENTY-SECOND INSTRUCTION.

Last Sunday, in explaining the meanings of the uncovering of the Chalice and the Communion of the Priest, in the Mass, we said that the *first* represents the taking down of the Body of Jesus from the cross; and the *second* figures its burial.

We started from the consideration that when Jesus was dead, God inspired two good and just men to take down His Body, and by this comforted His sorrowful Mother, the disciple St. John, and Mary Magdalene, who, standing by, were exceeding anxious to have It lowered.

From this circumstance we inferred that the Body of Jesus Christ is on the Altar for the Priest and the people's Communion. It effects their union with Him, and makes them one heart and one soul with one another, as they are made one with Him. This inference led us to mention the fact that the early Christians were wont to receive Holy Communion every morning during Mass, even at the risk of their lives. We placed this example before every Christian as a motive for receiving Holy Communion frequently, or at least, to have the earnest desire to receive it whenever, being present at Mass, the Christian notices the Priest preparing for and receiving It.

We next viewed Holy Communion as representing the burial of the Body of Jesus. We made this highly important point clear by showing that the preparations made before and after Its burial

are eloquently indicative of the preparations to be made by every Christian before and after Holy Communion. Hence, we said that as a new sepulchre was prepared for the burial of the Body of Jesus; so the Christian must make his soul new by casting out of it all his mortal sins and the predominant venial sins through a sincere and sorrowful confession, firm purpose of amendment, and absolution of the priest. We observed that as the Body of Jesus was anointed with abundant perfume of myrrh and aloes; so the Christian must adorn his soul with virtues, especially, self-denial, mortification, lively faith, firm hope and ardent charity in order that, upon coming to it through Holy Communion, Jesus may be delighted with its sweet odors. That, as the Body of Jesus was wrapped up in a new winding sheet, so the Christian must have his soul wrapped up in earnest reflection on its own unworthiness, and on the infinite goodness of Jesus in vouchsafing to come to it. We said that as after the Body of Jesus was laid in the sepulchre, a large stone was rolled to its entrance-door, to have it securely fastened and sealed; so the Christian must roll the stone of strict watchfulness to the entrance-

door of his soul, that neither bad habits nor exterior occasions of sin may steal Him from it, but it may hold Him and converse with Him,—thank Him for the precious favors brought to it, and beg of Him the grace of perseverance in fidelity to Him till the moment of resurrection from the life of grace to the life of glory.

To-day, we shall consider the meanings of the remaining parts of the Mass as far as the last Gospel. Having taken the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion, and the ablution while reciting prayers of thanksgiving and supplication, the Priest *covers the Chalice with the veil*, and the *server* of the Mass *carries the Missal back to the Epistle side.* All this reminds the Christian of the great stir which took place on the day after the burial of Jesus among the chief priests and the Pharisees, who hastened in a body to Pilate, and said to him: "We have remembered that that seducer said whilst he was yet alive: after three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest perhaps his disciples come, and steal him away, and say to the people, he is risen from the dead, and the last error shall be worse

than the first." Pilate acceded to their request, saying: "You have a guard; go, guard it as you know. They departed, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards."[1] All this was done in the early morning of Saturday by the enemies of Jesus; but they did not take into account the hidden designs of Almighty God, nor the Angels He had placed to guard the Body of His Son.

The people present at Mass notice that, after having covered the Chalice with the veil, the Priest leaves the middle of the Altar and goes to the Missal. This act reminds the Christian of the soul of Christ returning from Limbo in company with the host of the holy souls just delivered from it. Here, the Christian is likewise reminded of God's promise to protect the just, and, at the appointed time, to rescue them from the persecutions and snares of their enemies, as He did with Daniel in the lions' den.

As soon as the Priest has returned to the Missal, he reads out of it the *Anthem*, called the *Communion*, consisting of a Scriptural sentence, mostly taken from one of David's psalms. This *Anthem* is given

[1] St. Matthew, XXVII, 62, etc.

the name of *Communion*, because in the ages of fervent faith, psalms were sung while the people present at Mass were receiving Holy Communion. This part of the Mass represents the *Resurrection* of Jesus Christ at the rising of the sun on Sunday. While the devout Christian feels overjoyed at the remembrance of this glorious mystery, he imagines that he first sees the large multitude of the souls of the just from Limbo contemplating the dead Body of the Divine Redeemer, and realizing at what immense price He had effected their Redemption. The Christian also imagines that he is with them a witness to the soul of Jesus reentering His Sacred Body in the sepulchre; to the quaking of the earth,—that he sees the Angel of the Lord descending from heaven, rolling back the stone and sitting upon it,—that he beholds the guards stationed around the sepulchre, and their sudden looks of terror. And, last of all, his eyes are gladdened by the sight of Jesus Christ rising from the dead clad in great splendor and glory.

From this, the Christian learns that, after having received the Body of Jesus through Holy Communion, he also should rise to a new life, according to

the words of the Apostle: "As Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life."[1] Therefore, as Jesus Christ stripped Himself of His funeral garments, and came forth from the sepulchre alive, and with His Body glorious, entire, immortal, impassible, resplendent, subtle, and most beautiful, so the Christian must strip himself of the funeral garments of his passions and bad habits, and begin to lead the perfect life of grace, and to persevere in it till the moment he will be called to the life of glory. He must always bear in mind the warning of St. Paul, that in order to be partakers of Christ in His glorious Resurrection, it is necessary to be first partakers of His Passion;[2] for they cannot share in the joy and glory of Christ, who will not suffer with Christ. If there was ever a true believer and faithful servant, tried to the utmost in the crucible of afflictions, it was Job. He lived many centuries before the coming of the Redeemer, and, therefore, had not the benefit of His example. Still, we know that his great afflictions and sufferings did not shake his faith, nor daunt his hope, for, when tried and

[1] Rom., VI, 4. [2] II Cor., I, 7.

afflicted most, he said: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God."[1] These words contain the highest motives of consolation to the souls that are trained in the school of the cross; but the same words also hold a just rebuke to the Christians who refuse to bear patiently their afflictions, and forget that the road leading to joy and glory is overgrown with briers and thorns, according to the words of Jesus Christ to the disciples of Emmaus upon meeting them on the very day of His Resurrection: "Ought not Christ to have suffered, . . . and so enter into His glory?"[2]

The part of the Mass which now follows, is *the passing* of the Priest *from the Missal* to the middle of the Altar, then *his turning towards the people*, and *giving them the usual salutation.* All this represents Jesus Christ's *appearing alive*, and *giving peace to His disciples.* From His appearing alive to His disciples, the true Christian learns the sort of life he should lead. He learns that it is not sufficient to bear the name of Christian, but that he must also

[1] XIX, 25, 26. [2] St. Luke, XXIV, 26.

have the reality of the Christian life, free from the disorder of passions and the contamination of sin ; so that his life may be *new*. And therefore, whether still in possession of his baptismal innocence, or a convert through the Sacrament of Penance, a Christian must persevere in grace and good works ; for, as Christ is always Christ, so the Christian must always be a Christian in name and deed. It is this that makes the Christian a real disciple of Jesus Christ, and enables him to receive His peace.

Having turned towards the people and saluted them, the Priest *goes back again to the Missal, says one or more prayers, and, then, closes it.* This represents *Jesus teaching His disciples during the forty days after His Resurrection; and, then, His Ascension into heaven.* In the 1st chapter, 3rd verse, of the Acts of the Apostles, we are informed of the twofold object of Christ's remaining forty days upon earth. It was to prove to His Apostles that He was alive, and to speak to them of the Kingdom of God. In fact, the Evangelists, St. Luke and St. John say that late in the evening of the same day of the Resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared in the room where the Apostles were shut up for

fear of the Jews; and that after having hailed them with the greeting of peace, He told them not to be afraid, but to look at His hands and feet, and to satisfy themselves that He was alive again, according as He had foretold to them. Having seen and recognized Him as the Lord, they were overjoyed. From this and many other proofs recorded in the Gospel, the instructed Christian learns that Jesus Christ retained the marks of the wounds in His hands, feet, and side, even after His Resurrection, as a trophy of His victory over the devil, the world and sin; and as a perpetual memorial of His infinite love for us. Nay, more, He retained the marks of His wounds that He might constantly present them before His Heavenly Father, and, thereby, appease His justice, obtain abundant mercy for us, and invite us to rest our confidence in them, especially, in His sacred side, by making it our refuge in all our dangers and temptations. So, also, He appeared to the Apostles frequently, to speak to them of the Kingdom of God. He spoke to them of the Kingdom of God in heaven, namely, of the Church Triumphant, for which all men are created, and to which all men are invited. He also spoke to

them of the Kingdom of God upon earth, of the Church Militant, which is the way to the Church Triumphant, and a part of it. He taught the Apostles the fundamental constitution of the Church, the matter and formula of the Sacraments and the rites of their administration. He spoke to them of the different Orders in the Hierarchy of the Church;—of the law and necessity of fasting; of the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament and as a Sacrifice. He, also, again taught the faithful the necessity of constantly fighting against their inordinate passions, the devil and the world; of carrying the cross and enduring their trials and tribulations, in order to attain to the kingdom of heaven, for, said He: "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent bear it away."[1] Finally, He taught all the Christian virtues, and held them up as many ways leading to heaven.

Having sufficiently proven His Resurrection, founded His Church and vested it with His divine power to govern, teach, sanctify and save men's souls; Jesus Christ invited His disciples to Mount

[1] St. Matthew, xi, 12.

Olivet, and made that spot of His sorrows and humiliations the place of His glorious exaltation by ascending from it into heaven, to sit at the right hand of the Father, to have His human nature exalted above all creatures, to prepare a place of glory for His followers, to plead as advocate for all, and to protect the Church upon earth till the end of time.

We are now at the part of the Mass called the blessing by the Priest of the people present. This blessing represents the descent of the Holy Ghost. The ceremonies which precede and accompany the final blessing in the Mass are sublime, and cannot but deeply affect the instructed Christian. The Priest is seen taking a suppliant posture in the middle of the Altar, where he prays in silence to the Most Blessed Trinity for himself and the people; he, then, kisses the Altar,—raises his eyes and hands towards heaven,—bows to the crucifix,—turns towards the people, and, in the form of the cross, gives them the blessing, saying: *May Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, bless you.* To which the server of the Mass answers for the people, saying: *Amen.* The Christian, who realizes

the importance of this solemn blessing, understands why it is that it should be received on bended knees, and with sentiments of great piety and gratitude.

The Priest receives the blessing from Jesus Christ as he kisses what represents Him, the Altar. He raises his eyes and hands towards heaven, and bows his head as he invokes the heavenly blessing upon the people, to show that it behooves God to give His blessing to His people, for the attaining of heaven and its glorious eternity. In giving the benediction, the Priest makes the sign of the cross over the people, to show that it is through the merits of Jesus Christ that the heavenly blessing descends upon us.

Ten days after the Ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, the Apostles with the disciples, one hundred and twenty in all, were gathered together in a room, praying and waiting for the coming of the Holy Ghost. *He came down in the form of tongues of fire,* and took possession of them. Filled with the Holy Ghost, they instantly manifested His precious gifts to the utter astonishment of the multitudes, and became instruments in effecting a large number of conversions to Jesus Christ.

After having received *the blessing* from the Priest in the Mass, the people should show their high appreciation to God the Father of the exalted dignity conferred upon them by His having adopted them as His children through the Sacrament of Baptism. They should cherish the deepest gratitude to God the Son for having purchased them with His most precious Blood, and bequeathed Himself to all through the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice and a Sacrament. They should most highly value the love of God the Holy Ghost for having made them partakers of the divine truths and the treasures of grace, to enable them to attain the end of their Redemption, namely their sanctification and salvation. They should, therefore, like the Apostles and disciples after having received the Holy Ghost, be but one heart and one soul with one another, burn with zeal in prayer and in frequently receiving the doctrine of Christ, in approaching Holy Communion, and in devoting themselves to works of piety and charity.

TWENTY-THIRD INSTRUCTION.

The meanings drawn from the parts of the Mass considered on last Sunday, should remain deeply impressed upon our minds and hearts; for they greatly contribute to the devout assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, and to the securing of its precious fruits.

To-day, we shall consider the meanings of the closing part of the Mass, namely, *The last Gospel.* This part represents Jesus Christ crowned with glory in heaven, and assisting His Church to teach all nations "all days even to the consummation of the world."[1]

The Christian knows that in His humiliations, sufferings and death, the Humanity of Jesus Christ was left alone to endure them; and that His Divinity manifested Itself before the multitudes in the working of miracles and in the teaching of His doctrine, but it was for the good of mankind. It is true that His Divinity also manifested Itself in behalf of His Humanity before a few witnesses on the occasion of His Baptism in the river Jordan,

[1] St. Matthew, XXVIII, 20.

and at His Transfiguration. It was felt, too, by a large multitude of men as He was betrayed by Judas in the Garden of Olives. It is also true, that His Divinity glorified His Humanity through the wonders and conversions which occurred at His death, and Resurrection; and in His frequent apparitions during the following forty days; and, finally in His Ascension into Glory. But it was at His Triumphant Entrance into heaven, that His Humanity received Its due. His was truly a triumphant entrance, for, with the souls of the just He had delivered from Limbo, He bore with Him the first trophies of His spiritual victories. Following Him into Heaven, they must have cried in the ecstasy of the Beatific Vision,—"How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts; my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord."[1] Here, the Christian imagines that he hears the heavenly choirs joining these triumphant souls and singing David's holy praises: "Sing praises to our God, sing ye: sing praises to our King, sing ye. For God is king of all the earth, sing ye wisely. God shall reign over the nations: God sitteth on

[1] Ps. LXXXIII, 1.

His holy throne."[1] Together with the choir of the souls from Limbo, there entered Heaven a choir of ten thousand Angels who came to accompany Jesus Christ, and were, according to the royal prophet, the triumphant "chariot of God."[2] Upon reaching heaven, they all sang in great joy, saying to one another: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates, and the King of glory shall enter in!"[3] Having entered in this triumphant manner, and passed into the heavens,[4] Jesus Christ reached the throne of His Eternal Father in the highest heaven, and repeated to Him what He had said in His discourse after the Last Supper: "Father, I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do; and now glorify me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee."[5] In His infinite exultation, the Eternal Father bade Him sit "on His right hand" according as He had foretold through David, saying: "The Lord said to my Lord, sit Thou at my right

[1] Ps. XLVI, 7–9.
[2] Ps. LXVII, 18.
[3] Ps. XXIII, 7.
[4] Heb., IV, 14.
[5] St. John, XVII, 4, 5.

hand."[1] The Christian knows that Christ at the right hand of the Father is not to be understood according to the material posture of the body, for God the Father is a spirit infinitely perfect, and, therefore, has neither right nor left side. The Christian also knows that Christ's Body in heaven is not always sitting, for the Acts of Apostles state that St. Stephen "saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God;[2] and in the book of the Apocalypse "the Virgins" in heaven are described as "following the Lamb (namely Jesus Christ) whithersoever he goeth."[3] Therefore, by saying that the Heavenly Father bade Jesus Christ "to sit at His right hand," the Christian understands that as He had humbled Himself lower than all, so the Father exalted Him above all, by giving Him the throne of His Majesty in exchange for the throne of the cross,—the crown of glory for the crown of thorns,—the honors and praises of the blessed spirits for the ignominies and blasphemies of the Jews, and the hierarchy of Angels for the company of thieves. Because He had descended to the lowest parts of the earth, namely, Limbo, He made Him ascend to the highest

[1] Ps. CIX, 1. [2] VII, 55. [3] XIV, 4.

of the empyreal heaven, and "gave Him a name above all names, that in His name every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that He is in the glory of God the Father."[1]

From these considerations, the Christian derives great encouragement to be humble with Christ that he may be exalted with Christ; for, as the Father was faithful in rewarding His Only Begotten Son, so will He be faithful in rewarding His adopted sons. Jesus Christ intimated this consoling truth when He said: "If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me: and where I am, there also shall My minister be. If any man minister to Me, him will My Father honor."[2] With these words present to his mind, the Christian should seek Christ above all things, and be ever solicitous to do His holy will, according to St. Paul's exhortation: "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God."[3]

The title of Christian implies that the mind of its possessor should be turned towards the securing of the end for which Christ died and rose to life again. This end is to possess the vitality of charity upon

[1] Philip., II, 10, 11. [2] St. John, XII, 26. [3] Colos., III, 1.

earth, and the crown of glory in heaven. It is for this two-fold object that the Son of God became man; for, says He, "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly."[1] St. John Chrysostom and other holy Fathers interpret this text as meaning that Jesus Christ came upon earth to give life to His followers; but a life altogether new, namely, a life to the mind by the knowledge of His heavenly doctrine, a life to the will by a relish for His virtues and precepts, and a life to the soul by the possession of divine grace. This three-fold life is finally changed into the everlasting life of glory in heaven. The true Christian whose conduct is consistent with his faith in Jesus Christ, seeks the things of Jesus Christ enjoined by Him to be known, believed in or done upon earth, that he may secure the things that His Saviour has prepared for him in heaven. Millions of Christians who are now numbered among the Saints in heaven have done this in the past. Their motto was that of St. Paul: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"[2] Hence, it is owing to their union with Christ that they have worked out their sanctity

[1] St. John, x, 10. [2] Rom., VIII, 35.

upon earth, and attained to the reward of glory with Christ in heaven.

The Christian must hold Christ to be what He is, He is God and man. By taking humanity unto Himself, God gave to it the greatest mission, and rewarded it with the grant of the greatest right. With His Humanity, hypostatically united to His Divinity, Jesus Christ became the Saviour of all men; and, as such, He excelled all men as the superior excels the inferior. The salvation and reward of men were entrusted to Him; and, consequently, He was constituted the Sovereign Lord of the universe, namely of heaven and earth in the things pertaining to men's redemption and happiness.

Accordingly, the moment Jesus Christ received the highest place of honor from the Father, He began to exercise His right of distributing the seats of heaven amongst the souls which had ascended in His company. He gave everyone of them a seat according to his merits. It was then that each of the Patriarchs and of the Prophets;—that St. Joseph, the holy spouse of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, and the Precursor, St. John the Baptist, received from Jesus Christ their seat of glory. The

Christian imagines that he sees this awarding of seats in heaven, and witnesses the immense joy of the holy souls thus rewarded. Meanwhile, he is reminded of the promise made by Jesus Christ before His Ascension into heaven, saying: "I go to prepare a place for you."[1] As he remembers this, the Christian hopes and fears. He hopes to receive and fill that place; at the same time, he fears he may lose it. His sins are the cause of his great anxiety; but he is soon comforted by the knowledge that through a sincere and contrite confession, his sins will be forgiven him; and that Jesus Christ is in heaven as his Mediator and Advocate with the Father.[2] The Christian knows that the pleading of Jesus Christ is infallible, and, in its results, all needed graces are granted. The Christian knows that He has pledged His word to it; more, He has provided His believers and followers with inexhaustible sources of grace through the Sacraments and through the Sacrifice of the Mass. By assisting at Mass, the Christian is present at the continuation of the Sacrifice of the cross which was offered for the salvation of the world. At the bidding of

[1] St. John, xiv, 2. [2] *Ibid.*, ii, 1.

the Priest, through the words of Consecration, the same Jesus Christ descends upon the Altar and offers Himself anew as the victim of propitiation for the sins of all men; even more than this, He remains there, really present, and is eager to be taken as the food of souls through Holy Communion. The Christian, therefore, knows that all that is required of him to receive the fruit of Christ's mediation, is that he should love Him and earnestly seek the things of His spirit; for all that are so disposed may say, with St. Paul: "Let us go, therefore, with confidence to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid."[1]

The last Gospel in the Mass represents *Jesus Christ assisting His Church to teach all nations* "even to the consummation of the world."

He was about to ascend into heaven, when, turning most lovingly to His Apostles, He said to them: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and be-

[1] Hebr., IV, 16.

hold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."[1] Here, Jesus speaks of *the power* which *He wields as Redeemer of men;*—a power which He had acquired by His sufferings and by the shedding of His Blood; for, by having purchased all men, He had acquired an everlasting sovereign right over them to reunite them in His kingdom and to hold them as His own. "Christ," says St. Paul, "humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth."[2] By His saying: *I am with you;* He meant to say: *With my spirit I shall be with you and with your successors and with my whole Church till the end of ages.* The Christian Church, therefore, rests upon this immovable foundation, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. The instructed Christian cannot but find two great things in these words: 1st. That the Church shall never fail as long as the world lasts: 2nd. That, assisted by the spirit of

[1] St. Matthew, XXVIII, 18-20. [2] Philip., II, 8-10.

Jesus Christ, the Church shall never deviate from the truth, upon which she was founded by Him.

The Sunday of Pentecost was that great day when our Lord used His power in Heaven on behalf of His Church; it will always be memorable: He sent the Holy Ghost[1] to sanctify her,—to strengthen His Apostles, and enable them to preach the Gospel. From that day on, the Gospel was preached all over the earth; believers in Jesus Christ were made in large numbers, wherever men were not enslaved to corruption and vice. From that day on, God was known, loved and served. An acceptable worship was offered to Him, virtues, hitherto unknown, ennobled men, and made them realize and value their equality of origin and destiny. Stupendous miracles proved the divinity of the Church of Christ; and the ever increasing multitude of Saints ravished the eyes of God, Angels and men. Thus, miracles and sanctity are two constant and unerring testimonies of Christ's assistance to His Church; for, miracles are the effect of the intervention of God's power, as sanctity is the reproduction of the life of Jesus Christ in man.

[1] St. John, XIV, 26; XV, 26; XVI, 7.

These two testimonies of Christ's assistance to His Church find their continuous repetition in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. *There* is the miracle of miracles, called *Transubstantiation*, through which Jesus Christ becomes really and truly present on the Altar as victim of propitiation for the sins of men; and as food for their souls in Holy Communion. In the same Sacrifice of the Mass there is sanctity itself, the innocent victim, the Lamb of God, who intimates to both the Priest and to the people present; "You shall be holy, for I am holy."[1] The instructed Christian knows that all men are called to be holy, and that all should make theirs the words of St. Paul to his disciple Titus: "The grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men. Instructing us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to Himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works."[2]

[1] 1 St. Peter, I, 16. [2] II, 11, 14.

The conclusion from these considerations is that, as Jesus Christ offered Himself ready to suffer and lay down His life for the Redemption of mankind, when He said: "My Father, . . . not as I will, but as Thou wilt;"[1] "Rise, let us go,"[2] so the Christian must secure the fruits of Redemption, which are his sanctification and salvation, by submitting his own will to the will of God. And this consists in observing all His commandments. By such submission, man offers to God the only sacrifice that is acceptable to Him, and attains that sanctity which, through the grace of Christ and His merits, gives him a claim on the Kingdom of Heaven,—a claim strengthened every time the Christian devoutly hears Mass, trusting in the promises of the Divine Victim of the Altar.

TWENTY-FOURTH INSTRUCTION.

By the grace of God we have finished our task of love; for such, indeed, was the consideration of the allegorical meanings of the principal parts of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Our researches have

[1] St. Matthew, xxvi, 39. [2] *Ibid.*, 46.

been amply rewarded; for, in the Mass, we have found an inexhaustible mine of divine treasures, revealing the immense love of Jesus Christ for us, and containing most efficacious means to enrich our souls.

There are, however, some caskets of gems which I wish to lay open before you, that you may appreciate them better, and endeavor to make them your own; the more so, because they are necessary for us. Without them, we would be most miserable. Be it enough to say, that, were it not for the Mass, our condition in relation to God would be far worse than that of the servant who owed his master ten thousand talents; and, because he had not wherewith to pay that sum, he was condemned to a severe punishment.[1]

WHAT WE OWE GOD.

We owe God *honor*, *satisfaction*, *gratitude*, and *dependence*. 1st. We owe *honor* to His Divine Majesty for being His handiwork, and, therefore, His privileged creatures; 2nd. We owe *satisfaction* to His Divine Justice for the offences we have com-

[1] St. Matthew, XVIII, 24, 25.

mitted against Him; 3rd. We owe *gratitude* to His Divine Liberality for the many signal benefits He has bestowed upon us; 4th. We owe our *dependence* upon His Divine Bounty for the obtaining of the graces that are necessary to us.

These are debts that have to be paid to the last farthing; but as, by ourselves, we are not able to pay them, because they are enormous, nay, infinite in their relation to God; so He must have provided us with the means by which we are enabled to pay them. This means was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ: it is *the Mass* assisted at with the proper dispositions of body and soul.

You must have already perceived that the subject for our next consideration is on the four most excellent fruits of the Mass.

HONOR TO GOD.

The Christian knows that he is in duty bound *to honor* God by complying with His commandments, and by seeking the divine pleasure in all his actions; for our Blessed Lord says: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them: he it is that loveth

me;"[1] and St. Paul says: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do; do all to the glory of God."[2]

The Christian also knows that *the honor* which he owes to God must be proportionate to His Divine Majesty, for, says the Holy Ghost through the royal prophet: "Praise ye the Lord . . . according to the multitude of His greatness."[3] It is an universally accepted maxim, that the higher the rank of a person is, so much the higher is the honor that is due to him. According to this incontestable principle, as God's dignity is infinite; so an infinite honor is due to Him. But, as none, except God Himself, can give such an honor; so, to supply our insufficiency, Jesus Christ offers it to Him for us and with us through the ministry of the Priest in the Mass by immolating Himself under the sacramental species. By this act of self-immolation renewed on the Altar, Jesus Christ acknowledges the Sovereign Majesty of His Heavenly Father, and, thereby, offers Him an honor of infinite value. Any other sacrifice, even if it were offered by all

[1] St. John, XIV, 21.
[2] I Cor., X, 31.
[3] Ps. CL, 1, 2.

past, present, future, and even possible, creatures put together, could not equal the worth of the Sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ in the Mass. Not only that; but no sacrifice can be of any value before God, except in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ. His Heavenly Father has openly declared this great truth on the occasion of His Baptism and Transfiguration, when He said of Him: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;"[1] as if He had said: "Thou alone, O Christ, pleasest Me in the highest, nay, infinite degree; and none other can please Me, except through Thy merits and resemblance." Hence, says St. John, "we all have received of His fulness, and grace for grace;"[2] that is, all the graces, whichsoever they may be, from the first to the last, have come to us through Jesus Christ, and flow from the fulness of grace, by which He is acceptable to His Eternal Father. There is, therefore, nothing in the whole world that is so acceptable and precious before God as the Sacrifice of the Mass; for, in it, Jesus Christ is offered to Him with all His merits.

[1] St. Matthew, III, 17. [2] I, 16.

Ardent as has been the love for God in many men from the beginning of the world till now; great as have been the merits of all creatures in heaven and on earth; astounding as has been the fortitude of millions of martyrs in enduring most excruciating torments and sacrificing their lives for the honor and glory of God; many as have been the practices of virtues performed by the patriarchs, prophets, anchorites, and a host of other holy servants of God; and extraordinary as has been the number and excellence of the services of and praises from the Saints, those of the Blessed Virgin Mary included: yet all of them put together, and as many more as we may imagine, cannot equal the honor and praise that God receives from one single Mass. It is Jesus Christ who offers Himself to Him for us; and, through our union with the celebrating Priest, we join Him in the offering that He makes of Himself and of His infinite merits. It is thus that the Mass enables us to pay God our first debt; namely, to offer an infinite honor to His infinite Majesty. But mind, we are not for all that dispensed from the obligation of offering to God all the honor that is in our power. Moreover, our

honor to Him must come from us as His friends. To be His friends, we must be in state of grace, and do what God commands us; for, says our Blessed Lord: "You are my friends, if you do the things that I command you." [1]

TWENTY-FIFTH INSTRUCTION.

Last Sunday, on entering upon the subject of the fruits of the Mass, we said that we have four enormous debts towards God; namely, *honor* to His Divine Majesty; *satisfaction* to His Divine Justice; *gratitude* to His Divine Liberality; and *dependence* upon His Divine Bounty. Having admitted that by ourselves alone we are not able to pay these debts, we saw that we are enabled to pay them through the Mass assisted at with the proper dispositions.

We have already considered our first debt, that of honor, paid in the Mass by Jesus Christ for us and with us. In concluding, we remarked that, though He honors God for us, yet we are bound to

[1] St. John, xv, 14.

offer Him our own share of honor by being His friends, that is in state of grace, and observing His commandments. We shall now proceed with the subject, and ask ourselves the question: Can we say that we have always been God's friends? Can we truly say that we have always been in state of grace, and observed God's commandments? Alas, no! Therefore, instead of honoring God, we have dishonored Him. It took but little effort to dishonor Him; but it is exceedingly difficult, nay, impossible for us alone, to appease His justice and offer Him adequate satisfaction.

APPEASING GOD'S JUSTICE.

Because Absalom had killed his brother Ammon, David forbade him to ever come into his presence. Had it not been for Joab's great influence and entreaties, he would never have been permitted to see again his father's face. Absalom's offence was certainly grievous; it was from a son to a father: yet, it was, after all, an offence from a man to a fellow-man. But as the commission of sin involves, nay, is an offence from a finite being to the infinite Being,

from a creature to the Creator; it calls for a proportionate reparation. But how can the sinner make it? All the virtues, merits and supplications of the Saints in heaven and on earth could not form an adequate compensation for even one single sin. The patriarchs and prophets were aware of this, and were, therefore, frequently warning the people not to offend God, and crying out to Him, saying: "Lord, send whom Thou wilt send,"[1] Moreover, they were daily offering propitiatory sacrifices, which God vouchsafed to accept, not on account of their intrinsic value, for they had none; but because they were a figure of the real sacrifice that was to be offered on the cross; and, also, because they served to excite faith in the coming Redeemer. The Sacrifice possessing the intrinsic power of reconciling men to God was reserved for the Christian era: it is the Mass.

In compliance with the demand of the Lord Jesus Christ, who said: "This do, for a commemoration of Me;"[2] at the consecration of the Chalice in the Mass, the Priest speaks His words: "This is My Blood of the New Testament which shall be shed

[1] Exod., IV, 13. [2] St. Luke, XXII, 19; I Cor., XI, 24.

for many unto remission of sins."[1] No sooner are these words spoken by the Priest in the Mass, than the Blood of Jesus Christ is really in the Chalice. It is the same Blood of the same Divine Victim, of the same spotless Divine Lamb that was shed on the cross to reconcile men to God, to take away the sins of men. It is the offering of this Blood in the Mass that supplies our insufficiency to appease God. Hence, it is that the Mass is called a *propitiatory sacrifice*. But mark, that when we say that it is propitiatory, we do not mean to say that it has the power of forgiving our sins. This power belongs to the Sacrament of Penance. What we mean, is that the Mass, assisted at with pure hearts, lively faith, and sincere sorrow for our past sins, obtains for us the dispositions necessary to the securing of God's pardon in the tribunal of penance. Thus it is that, through the Mass, "we obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid."[2] The moment that we succeed in appeasing God, His mercy supersedes His justice, and His avenging hand is removed from over our heads. As but for the sacrifice of the cross, the world would still be lying under the

[1] St. Matthew, xxvi, 28. [2] Hebr., iv, 16.

ban of reprobation; so, but for the continual commemoration and renewal of that same sacrifice, namely, the Mass, the world would before now have sunk under the enormous weight of its blasphemies, frauds, injustices, treacheries, revenges, immoralities and scandals.

THE MASS BENEFICIAL TO THE ABSENT, LIVING OR DEAD.

But the Mass obtains God's mercy not only for those present at it, but also for the absent, whether living or dead. In one of his dialogues, St. Gregory the Great illustrates this consoling truth with the following incident: "A man, who had fallen victim of a conspiracy, was thrown into prison, and for long time kept therein in fetters. All the inquiries about him having proved vain; his wife thought him dead, and, hence, caused weekly Masses to be offered for his soul. Now, it happened that every time that Mass was being said for him, his prison-door opened and his fetters fell off from him. He greatly wondered at the strange occurrence, and could not account for it; but, after he was set free,

and had returned home, he learned from his wife that the wonderful happenings had taken place on the days and at the hour in which Mass was being said for him." From this incident, the Holy Pontiff draws the conclusion that if the Mass offered for that man was beneficial to his body, though absent from its celebration; the Mass is much more beneficial to the soul of the Christian who properly assists at it. To this we shall add: if the Mass did good to that man who was fettered in a prison; it will also benefit the living and the dead for whom we offer it, for the Church teaches that the Mass is a *propitiatory sacrifice* for *the living* and *the dead*.[1] True; the souls in Purgatory are no longer in state of meriting, and cannot, therefore, apply to themselves the merits of Jesus Christ; but, through a merciful disposition of God, they can receive the application of Christ's merits through us, by our offering the Sacrifice of the Mass with the intention of helping them out of their sufferings. In many cases, the Mass is the only means to do them good; for, whether good works done in state of mortal sin can be of any benefit to souls in

[1] Trident. Sess. 22 de Sacrif. Missæ can. 2 et 3.

Purgatory, when offered to God for them; I have no authority for saying that they can. It appears, that, to be beneficial to them, good works should be first beneficial to the offerer. But the Mass, though caused to be offered by one who is in state of mortal sin, and, therefore, in enmity with God, will reach and benefit the souls or soul for whom it is offered. The reason for it is that, in the Sacrifice of the Mass, God does not consider the unworthiness of the offerer, but only the merit of the victim, namely, Jesus Christ. Hence, by having a Mass said for the souls in Purgatory, or for any dead or living person, we are sure to reach them, and benefit them.

SATISFYING GOD'S JUSTICE.

But our debt to God is not only to appease Him, but also *to give Him full satisfaction* for the offences done to Him. We owe Him reparation for having disregarded Him, and acted in opposition to His will. Hence, His Justice intimates to each one of us: "Pay what thou owest."[1] Therefore, after having appeased God's anger and secured His par-

[1] St. Matthew, XVIII, 28.

don, we are yet bound to atone for our sins: "Pay what thou owest." In sin there are two evils: one is the stain made on the soul; the other is the punishment that it entails. The Christian knows that through the Sacrament of Penance properly received, the stain of sin is washed out from the soul, and the eternal punishment is entirely forgiven; but, ordinarily, there yet remains a temporal punishment to be undergone either in this or in the next life. Holy Scriptures confirm and illustrate this great truth with telling examples. Let that of David answer for all. Because he had confessed his sin, the prophet Nathan assured him that the Lord had taken it away, and he would not die; but his child would die; and the sword, namely, temporal afflictions, would never depart from his house.[1] In fact, afflictions followed him to his grave, though he implored God's mercy day and night, and served Him most faithfully during the remainder of his life.

This would also be our condition, if left to ourselves; for we would remain perpetual debtors of God. Even if we should atone for our sins, as we are strictly bound, by bearing our trials in a

[1] II Kings, XII, 10, 13, 14.

Christian spirit,—mortifying our passions, and abounding in works of charity, we should yet be far from paying God our full debt of satisfaction. But well for us is it that in the Mass Jesus Christ places at our disposal the capital of His infinite merits wherewith to pay God our full debt of satisfaction. The Mass, then, is to us like a letter of credit from Jesus Christ, with which we can draw from the treasure of His Passion and Death, and pay God. Therefore it is that, while by the Sacrifice of the cross Jesus Christ has laid up an infinite treasure for us; by the Sacrifice of the Mass He dispenses it to us. The Christian who understands well this point of doctrine, cannot fail to hear Mass properly, and secure its rich fruits.

TWENTY-SIXTH INSTRUCTION.

Last Sunday, we considered our second enormous debt to God, namely, that of satisfaction to His Divine Justice for having dishonored Him, and, therefore, offended Him by the commission of sin. You will remember that the debt of satisfaction

bears two obligations: one is to appease God; the other is to atone for the offence done to Him. We saw that, by ourselves, we are not able to fully comply with either; and that our insufficiency is supplied by Jesus Christ in the Sacrifice of the Mass. We proved and illustrated this great truth with telling examples. In speaking first of our debt of appeasing the Justice of God, we said that, in the Mass, Jesus Christ appeases Him for us and with us by offering anew His most precious Blood to Him; for which reason the Mass is called a propitiatory sacrifice: not, however, in the sense that it forgives our sins, but inasmuch as it obtains for us the dispositions necessary for the securing of God's pardon in the tribunal of Penance, namely, through the Sacramental confession.

We said, moreover, that the Mass gains God's mercy not only for those present; but, also, for the absent, whether living or dead, for whom it is offered. We remarked that, in many cases, the Mass is the only means to help them; for, when good works are done while in the state of mortal sin, they are dead works, and, therefore, cannot benefit others: whereas the Mass, though caused to

be offered by a person in state of mortal sin, will reach and benefit those for whom it is offered; because, in the Mass, God does not consider the unworthiness of the offerer; but only the merit of the victim, namely, Jesus Christ.

From the obligation of appeasing God's Justice, we passed to that of giving Him full satisfaction by atoning for our sins already forgiven through the Sacrament of Penance. In reference to this, we said that even if we did all in our power to atone for them, as we are strictly bound, we would yet be far from being able to offer to God full satisfaction, and would, therefore, remain His perpetual debtors. Here, we pointed out the Mass as the sure means that enables us to pay God our full debt of satisfaction; for, in the Mass, Jesus Christ places at our disposal the capital of His infinite merits; since, by the Sacrifice of the Mass, He dispenses to us the infinite treasure that He has laid up for us by the Sacrifice of the cross.

To-day, we shall consider our third enormous debt to God, namely, that of *gratitude* for the signal benefits we have received from His Divine Liberality.

GOD'S LIBERALITY.

God's liberality appears manifest in the benefits that He has lavished on us, both in the order of nature and grace. Who can enumerate them, and fully understand their extent and value? It is God that has created the world;—vested it with the power of producing all sorts of fruits for our subsistence and comfort,—made it beautiful to charm our eyes, and impress us with our excellence over all other creatures, and with the infinite perfections of the Creator. It is God that, with His infinite power, wisdom and love, has shaped our body into the wonderful structure that it is. It is He that has created and infused into our body the soul that animates us, and created it in His own image and likeness, and, therefore, endowed it with the spiritual powers of memory, understanding and free will. It is God who, having made us the noblest of creatures, has honored us with the company of one of His heavenly spirits, an Angel, to protect us, assist us, counsel and guide us on the way to the end for which He has made us. Finally, it is God who has ordained that all the lower creatures should serve us.

As to the benefits in the order of grace, they excel those of nature just as heaven excels the earth. It is God who has called us to the supernatural light of Faith, and destined us to the supernatural life of heavenly glory. It is He who to this effect, has given us His only Begotten Son to repair the ruin brought on mankind by the sin of our first parents, and to reinstate men in their original dignity. It is, therefore, for us that He came upon earth,—took human nature upon Himself, and, thereby, honored it above all other created things. It is through Him, that God has replaced virtue on the pedestal of honor, restored the right of merit, and reopened the way to everlasting happiness. And because, on account of the first sin committed in the garden of Eden, we were born estranged from God and His enemies, and doomed to eternal perdition, His Divine Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has reconciled us to Him by humbling Himself to the lowly condition of servant, laboring, suffering and dying the ignominious death of the cross. And more, in order that we might partake of the merits of His humiliations, labors, sufferings and death: He founded the Church, created a nobler priesthood, and instituted

the Sacraments, to supply us with the means to live up to the exalted dignity of adopted children of God, and, thus, deserve the attainment of the heavenly inheritance. The climax of God's benefits to us, however, is that of having given us the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice and a Sacrament; that, through the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice, we might have the application of the infinite merits of His Divine Son, which He laid up for us by the Sacrifice of the cross; and through the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament, we might receive His Divine Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, by receiving His Body and Blood, to be the food of our souls. For it is the means of ineffable union between us and Him, Him and us; and, thereby, the pledge of eternal life.

Now that we have seen the glowing outline of God's benefits to us, we should ask ourselves: Have we been grateful to Him? Have we lived for Him? Have we devoted our hearts to serving Him? Have we sought His divine pleasure in the use of the senses of our body,—of the faculties of our soul, and of our temporal goods? The answer will show our ingratitude.

What is ingratitude? Let us hear it from reason alone. A pagan poet, if I err not, Horace, said that "it is wrong to do any service to the ungrateful." Another, called Ausonius, said that "the earth cannot produce any thing worse than an ungrateful man." Hence the old saying: "if you call a man ungrateful, you say every thing against him." These testimonies prove that the world has nothing but contempt for the ungrateful. This fact shows that the world demands that man should acknowledge and show himself thankful for benefits received from his fellow-man.

But, if gratitude is demanded of man as man for benefits received from his fellow-man, what must be the gratitude required of a Christian for benefits received from God? The instructed Christian knows that, as a proximate preparation for the essential part of the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Consecration, the people present at it join the Priest in the Introduction to it, called the Preface. The Priest, first, wishes the Lord to be with them, saying: *Dominus vobiscum;* then, he invites them to lift up their hearts, saying: *Sursum corda;* afterwards, he calls upon them to be united with him in giving thanks

to the Lord God, saying: *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro.* To all of which, the people present answer through their representative, namely, the choir, or the server of the Mass, saying: "May the Lord be also with thee;—we have our hearts lifted up to the Lord;—it is meet and just that we should give thanks to Him." Being thus united to the Priest, he continues and says: "It is truly meet and just, right and available to salvation, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God." Then follows the specification of the principal benefits for which we feel grateful, and offer our thanks. But, as they are various and too numerous to be recounted in one Preface, so they are recounted in as many different Prefaces as are the principal benefits recorded by the Mysteries celebrated during the principal festivals of the year.

By this profession, Christians are not done with their obligation to God; but they only make a solemn and public manifestation of the gratitude which they are expected to profess during their lifetime. Now, to be real and sincere, our gratitude to God must have its expression in constantly remem-

bering His benefits; in unremittingly loving Him as our Benefactor; in earnestly endeavoring to serve Him; and in never ceasing to praise Him and thank Him. The first test of gratitude is then a clear remembrance of the benefits received. The benefactor has the right to know that his benefit is kindly remembered and appreciated. To fail to show that we recognize this right in him, is a sign of ingratitude on our part.

Would to God, that fewer Christians were guilty of it; but, alas! there are many who scarcely ever give a thought to the signal benefits they have received from God. They treat them as if they were worth nothing. They are so taken up with the passing things of this world, that the things of God seem trifles.

But our concern is not to inquire or know whether others are complying with their obligation of gratitude, but whether *we* have fulfilled it. If we have neglected it, and are, therefore, guilty of the crime of ingratitude, we should, first of all, repent for it; then firmly resolve not to let a day pass without recalling God's benefits to mind, and offering Him our sincere thanks.

The second test of gratitude is love for the benefactor. But how are we to kindle the fire of love in our hearts for God as our benefactor? By the frequent and earnest remembrance of His benefits. As by holding up a piece of looking glass to the sun, its rays so centre on it, that they gradually develop heat, so the benefits of God earnestly brought to mind, and as earnestly considered, will produce within our hearts the fervor of charity and the heavenly fire of love. To render this consideration more effective, we ought to bear in mind our unworthiness for receiving God's benefits, and then the eminent condescension of God in conferring them upon us, though unworthy and ungrateful. In fact, what are we but creatures made out of nothing; having nothing of our own. We are blind in mind and perverted in heart; children of wrath, we deserve death. And what is God, but infinite perfection, the eternal, holy, immense, omnipotent, immutable, wise, omniscient and loving Being, by whom all things exist, are preserved and governed; compared to Whom all creatures in the universe are but an imperceptible jot. This consideration establishes God's generosity towards us, and forcibly

impresses upon our minds the fact that God has conferred His immense benefits upon us, who are nothing more than insignificant, unworthy and ungrateful creatures.

The third test of gratitude is an earnest endeavor to serve God. By creation, we belong to Him; for we are His handiwork,—are made by Him in His own image and likeness, and placed by Him in this world for the sole purpose of serving Him. As the work of His hands, He has an absolute dominion over us; and, therefore, He has a far greater right over us than a master over his servant. Hence, God has an indisputable right to our constant service. As the image and likeness of God, we are bound to be subject to Him and serve Him, that we may be faithful copies of the divine prototype. Wherefore, our Blessed Lord warns His disciples, saying: "Be ye perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect."[1] But, even if we were not made to God's image and likeness, we would still be bound to serve Him, for such is the end for which we were created. We are bound to serve God just as our body is to serve the soul, animals are to serve man,

[1] St. Matthew, v, 48.

and tools the mechanic. Now, to serve God is to know Him, fear Him, love Him, honor Him, praise Him, obey His commandments, and do all things to His glory. This is the purpose for which we were created, and exist upon earth. We were not made, and placed in this world, to eat and drink, or to seek riches, honor and pleasures; for such things are passing, and unworthy of us. We were made, and placed in this world, to know and love God—the supreme good, and to keep His commandments during our short stay here below, that we may deserve the eternal bliss, which consists in seeing God face to face, and enjoy His everlasting happiness. Therefore, if we consider ourselves as God's work and image, we are led to infer that we are necessarily bound to serve God, and that this, and none other, is the object of our existence in this world.

The fourth test of gratitude is earnestness in praising and thanking God for the benefits we have received from Him. We must profess our gratitude to Him by cherishing Him in our minds and hearts, and with our lips. We must thank Him by using His benefits in the way that pleases Him. Even in

danger we must praise God. A good way to praise Him is for men to take off their hat and for women to bow their head in passing a Church, and, to assume a reverent posture at Mass, and Vespers, and while preparing for Confession and Communion. Likewise, a good way to thank God is to imitate His liberality by practicing works of charity towards the needy.

Now, that we have seen the manner of paying our debt of gratitude to God, can we say we have always endeavored to pay it; or must we not acknowledge that we have been ungrateful? None can be sufficiently grateful; but none need despair of the continuation of His liberality; for, in the Sacrifice of the Mass, Jesus Christ supplies our insufficiency and neglect. In fact, says St. Ireneus, "the Sacrifice of the Mass was precisely instituted by Jesus Christ, that we might not be ungrateful.[1] In the Incarnation, the Eternal Father offered His Only Begotten Son but once to us; whereas, by the Sacrifice of the Mass we offer His only Son to Him as often as we properly assist at it. We, then, make superabundant returns to God for His benefits to us; for, by the Mass, we offer to Him the true Body

[1] L. 4. contra hæres. c. 32.

and Blood of Jesus Christ, which far excel His benefits to us. These things only need to be remembered to induce the Christian to assist at Mass regularly on Sundays and Holidays of obligation, and frequently on week days.

TWENTY-SEVENTH INSTRUCTION.

In last Sunday's Instruction, we have considered our third enormous debt to God, namely that of *gratitude* for the signal benefits we have received from His Divine Liberality.

To establish God's generosity towards us, we showed that it is He that has made us, and honored us with excellence over all other creatures in the order of nature; and that, in the order of grace, it is He that has rendered us His adopted children, made us partakers of the means of sanctification and salvation, and given us the right to the heavenly inheritance. To these immense benefits conferred upon us, we added another, which we qualified the climax of all; namely, that of having given us the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice and a Sacrament:

that, through the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice, we might receive the application of the infinite merits of His Divine Son, our Lord Jesus Christ which He laid up for us by His sacrifice on the cross. And that through the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament, we might receive Jesus Christ Himself by receiving His Body and Blood as food of our souls —the means of ineffable union between us and Him, Him and us, and, thereby, the pledge of eternal life.

With these benefits of God before us, we asked ourselves whether we had been grateful by using them as means of and motives for loving Him, and serving Him. We admitted that we had not, and were, therefore, guilty of the basest ingratitude to Him. Here, we quoted the testimony of pagan writers to show that reason brands ingratitude as contemptible. From this fact, we argued that, if gratitude is demanded of man as man for benefits received from his fellow men; it must by far greater motive, be required of a Christian for benefits received from God. At this juncture, we described the people and the Priest united in solemn and public manifestation of their gratitude to God as a proximate preparation for the essential part of the

Sacrifice of the Mass, namely, the Consecration. We said that this manifestation, which is made by the recitation or singing of the Preface, expresses our gratitude as abiding within our hearts through our constant remembrance of God's benefits, our unremitted love for Him as our Benefactor, and our earnest endeavor to serve Him, praise Him and thank Him.

We, then, dwelt upon these four tests of true and sincere gratitude, and pointed them out as the practical manner of paying this debt to God. From this we passed to ask ourselves whether we had endeavored to make use of it, or had been all along ungrateful. Our conclusion was that none can be sufficiently grateful to God, but none need despair of the continuation of His liberality; for, in the Sacrifice of the Mass, Jesus Christ supplies our insufficiency. In support of this consoling truth, we quoted St. Ireneus as saying that "the Sacrifice of the Mass was precisely instituted by Jesus Christ that we might not be ungrateful." In fact, we remarked, in the Mass we offer to God His Only Begotten Son every time we properly assist at it, while He offered Him to us but once, namely, in the In-

carnation. Therefore, through the Mass, we make superabundant returns to God for His benefits to us; and, on this account, we should hail the coming of Sundays and Holidays of obligation, as the days set apart for the hearing of the Mass.

To-day, we shall consider our fourth enormous debt to God, namely, our dependence upon His Divine Bounty for the receiving of the graces that are necessary to us.

DEBT OF DEPENDENCE UPON GOD'S BOUNTY.

While on earth, man has many needs. To these he is unable to provide by himself. His wants are partly *temporal* and partly *spiritual*. The *temporal* are peace, health, success in business, the necessaries and comforts of life. The *spiritual* may be reduced to one, namely, to the grace of God as an interior help to the soul. As this is the most important, so we shall confine ourselves to it, and say, at the very outset, that, for the obtaining of it, the Christian is entirely dependent upon the Bounty of God.

Its absolute necessity appears from what it is. It is the help necessary to the mind to think of,—

necessary to the heart to love, and necessary to the will to pursue the things required for self-sanctification; and is, moreover, the means necessary to the soul for its direction and protection. It stands to reason, that it is impossible to love a thing without having, beforehand, an idea of it; and that it is equally impossible to will a thing without first loving it. Accordingly, the Christian needs the grace of light to his mind to conceive good, pious and wholesome thoughts: he needs the grace of fervor to his heart to earnestly dwell upon them; and he needs the grace of determination to his will to either do, or conform to the things that are in his mind and heart. But it is not enough to have good thoughts only now and then; because the mind is easily diverted by the senses to earthly things. It, therefore, follows that if the mind is not constantly helped, it finds it difficult to dwell upon good thoughts;—it soon feels distaste for them, nay, it parts with them. Hence, the mind needs a help to strengthen it, and to arouse its imagination till the heart is moved to cherish the thoughts, and the will is prompted to act accordingly. With this help, it is easy to despise earthly things; it is easy to yearn

after the heavenly, and to do heroic acts of virtue. Just as those who constantly think of earthly things, such as honors, riches and pleasures, and look upon them as good and attractive, cannot help loving them and pursuing them; so, they who frequently think over spiritual things, and ponder over their excellence, cannot but love them, and endeavor to possess them at the cost of any sacrifice. It appears from this, how important, nay, necessary it is to obtain the grace of God as a light to the mind to have good thoughts,—as a fervor to the heart to desire good things, and as a spur to the will to do the works of virtue suggested by the mind and yearned by the heart. Upon this depends every advancement in spiritual life, holiness and perfection.

But, as there are obstacles which may prevent or delay the pursuit of the things necessary to true Christian life, so the Christian also needs the grace of *direction.* Man's thoughts, desires and will, may be good; but exterior things which are not in his power to control, may prevent him from acting accordingly. He, therefore, needs the special help of God, which I call *direction.* In fact, the Holy Ghost warns every man of its necessity, by saying through the

prophet Jeremias: "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not his: neither is it in a man to walk, and to direct his steps."[1] By this, the prophet meant to say: "I am aware, O Lord, that man is blind and weak, and beset by various enemies; and, therefore, without Thy aid, he cannot walk on the way which Thou hast pointed out to him, namely, that which leadeth to upright and holy life." It is, then, evident that, while God's help is necessary to the mind to conceive good thoughts, and to the heart to cherish them; it is even more necessary to the will that it may act accordingly, for it is more difficult to practice than to think and desire. In reality, without God's extra help to the will, man would only be too apt to do according to the old saying: "I see what is best, and approve of it; but I follow what is worse." In this, we see how true are the words of the Holy Ghost: "the heart of man disposeth his way, but the Lord must direct his steps."[2]

It, therefore, follows, that this special help of God is necessary to man's will for three things: 1st. To remove the obstacles that are in his way; 2nd. To offer him favorable opportunities to act; 3rd. To

[1] x, 23. [2] Prov., xvi, 9.

guide him with good inspirations. Let us illustrate this point: a young man feels called to the priesthood; a young woman to a religious order; a person is impelled to do some great act of charity; but there are obstacles in the way to the accomplishment of their wishes, which they are unable to remove. What then? They need the special help of God to direct their steps, namely, to dispose things so that the obstacles may be removed, favorable opportunities offered, good advice given them through prudent men, and thus the way made clear for them to accomplish their good intentions. In moments of crisis like this, how much do we owe to the Guardian Angels? These considerations show the necessity of another grace, namely, that of God's *protection*. We know that it is easier to commence well than to persevere. But, as we also know that Jesus Christ has said: "He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved;"[1] so God's protection is as necessary against not persevering as against not being saved.

We, then, need God's protection not to fall into sin, specially mortal; not to resist His inspirations; not to break our good resolutions; not to be pre-

[1] St. Matthew, xxiv, 13.

vented from carrying them out; and to escape any other danger of this life. It appears from this, that we need God's protection to check the power of the devil, and not permit him to tempt us above our strengths; for we read in holy Job that "there is no power upon earth that can be compared with him:"[1] so much so that if he were permitted to use all his power and artifices, he could easily pervert the whole world, nay, even all the just. Moreover, we need God's protection against all the occasions of sin that may proceed from the devil, or the world, or the flesh; and into which God foresees that we would fall through our neglect, or imprudence, or frailty. Finally, we need God's protection to shield our bodies from harm, and our property from damage, through causes independent of us.

With all these wants, on the one hand and with our slothfulness for good and propensity to evil; in face of powerful enemies, on the other hand, we cannot but realize that we are absolutely dependent upon the Bounty of God. Therefore we stand in constant need of His assistance to live for Him, sanctify ourselves, and save our souls. But how

[1] XLI, 24.

are we to obtain this necessary benefit from God? Our Blessed Lord teaches us to ask of Him all that we need, and ask it in His name; and He will give it to us.[1] Yet, what will become of us, if, on account of our unworthiness, He will not hear our prayers, though we need His help? The Sacrifice of the Mass is the infallible means to secure it. It is related of Alphonsus of *Albucherche*, famous in the annals of Portugal for his victories in India, that, upon finding himself and his army in imminent danger of shipwreck from a violent storm, by a happy thought, he took in his arms a little innocent child which was aboard of the vessel, and, holding it up towards heaven, said this prayer: "O Lord, for the sake of this innocent child, spare us wretched sinners!" The pleading was no sooner made than it was heard; for, suddenly, the sea became calm, and thus, fear was changed into joy. While upon earth, our life is tossed about by the stormy waves of temptations, trials and wants; but good for us that in the Sacrifice of the Mass we have Jesus Christ, the innocent Son of God, who makes our prayers His own,—presents them to Him together with the

[1] St. John, xvi, 23.

merits of His Passion and Death,—shows Him the sacred wounds of His hands, feet and side, that He received for the love of us, and, thereby, "maketh intercession for us."[1] Therefore, while it remains true that we are unworthy of being heard by God; it is certain that Jesus Christ is heard for us, for He said: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth;"[2] and for this reason, St. John says: "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just."[3]

Now that we have considered the principal fruits of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we should hold them in the highest estimation, and earnestly endeavor to secure them. They are treasures of infinite value placed at our disposal wherewith to pay our enormous debts to God, enrich and save our souls.

TWENTY-EIGHTH INSTRUCTION.

The considerations that we have made from Sunday to Sunday, have convinced us that the Sacrifice of the Mass is really an inexhaustible mine of

[1] Rom., VIII, 34.
[2] St. Matthew, XXVIII, 18.
[3] I Ep., II, 1.

divine treasures; all revealing the immense love of Jesus Christ for us, and all intended to enrich our souls. But, if the Sacrifice of the Mass is the rich mine that it is, and we have been, from childhood, close to it every Sunday and Holiday of obligation, and frequently on week days; can we say that we have all along worked it, and, therefore, excavated therefrom the divine gold necessary to make us rich in virtue and holiness here upon earth, and to purchase the yearned comforts of heaven? Let us offer thanks to God for the spiritual wealth that the Sacrifice of the Mass has so far yielded to our efforts; but let us endeavor to make it produce more.

To secure a greater production from the Mass, it is necessary to observe a steady, practical system. This is what is now presented to you as the subject of this Instruction.

PRACTICAL MANNER OF HEARING MASS.

It is related that, one day, during his novitiate, St. Bernard asked himself the question: "Bernard, for what didst thou come here?" "To study," answered he. "Study, then, Bernard," he concluded. Even so, in starting for Church, the Chris-

tian would do well if in earnestness he asked himself: "For what am I going to Church?" With the knowledge that he has of what the Mass is, his answer cannot be but this: "I am going to Church not only to be present there, but to take a most important and active part in the greatest act of Christian Religion, and to draw from it as much of its immense treasures as I can for the purpose of enriching my soul."

In fact, the instructed Christian knows that, while at Mass, a panorama of superhuman grandeur lies before the eyes of his soul; namely, that of the different stages of the Passion of the Divine Redeemer as have taken place on Mount Calvary, and are mystically reproduced on the Altar. That, together with it, he is reminded of the Redeemer's other marks of love that He manifested to all men through the subsequent mysteries, namely, from that of His glorious Resurrection, to those of His holding the place of honor in the kingdom of heaven; of His wielding the power of dispenser of the seats of heavenly glory; and of His assisting His Church upon earth, and all those who believe in Him, and follow Him through the observance of His com-

mandments. The instructed Christian, therefore, knows that, by assisting at Mass, he is close to immense spiritual riches—all lying open before him that he may help himself to them. He knows that they are necessary to him; so necessary, that, without them, he would not have wherewith to pay his enormous indebtedness to God,—to please Him here, and deserve His heavenly inheritance hereafter. The instructed Christian also knows that, but for the Mass, he might not be able to do any good to his relatives, friends and benefactors, whether living or dead.

DISPOSITIONS FOR THE FRUITFUL HEARING OF THE MASS.

With these considerations mastering the attention of his mind, the Christian should in all earnestness supply himself with the implements required for the spiritual mining; he should, namely, fit himself for the hearing of, and deriving the wanted precious fruits from the Mass. There are, therefore, certain dispositions concerning his body, and others concerning his soul, which the Christian is required to observe before, during, and after Mass.

As to the dispositions of his body, the Christian should avoid every excitement of his senses; otherwise his mind and heart will not be equal to their spiritual work. The instructed Christian knows that before his Mass, or the two Masses, and even the three Masses at Christmas, the Priest eats and drinks nothing, principally because he has to consummate the Holy Sacrifice through Holy Communion, and also because of the reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament. But now, as the people present are the co-offerers with the Priest of the same Sacrifice; so it seems but proper that they should limit themselves to a light meal before Mass.

So, likewise, care should be taken not to go to Church dressed in a manner or style above one's station in life, or only proper for a social gathering, and, therefore, improper for the Church where the Mysteries of Calvary are celebrated. In the history of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, it is related that, in the year 629, Heraclius, emperor of Constantinople, took back to Jerusalem the true cross which he had rescued from the infidels' possession, and that he carried it on his own shoulders as far as the gate of the city; but at this place, an

invisible force prevented him from moving on any further. The patriarch Zachary, who was by his side, unravelled the strange cause of it to the emperor, saying: "It is not thus that Christ carried the cross: you are wearing your gaudy imperial robes; but Christ was poorly clad: you have on your head a rich diadem; but Christ had on His a crown of thorns: you walk with shoes on; but Christ walked barefooted." Upon hearing this, the emperor laid aside his purple and precious crown,—put on mean clothes, and, barefooted, started with the cross without hindrance. This incident carries its lesson with it.

While in Church, the body should assume a posture exhibiting reverence and adoration. Good care should also be taken to refrain from talking, gazing around, or, in any way, disturbing the fellow worshippers.

After Mass, two extremes should be avoided, namely, the spending of a considerable part of the day in idleness, and the indulging in such recreations as are inconsistent with Christian piety, and contrary to the spirit of the law, which is to keep holy the day of the Lord.

As to the dispositions of the soul; the Christian should turn to good use his mind, heart and will. We can well imagine what men think and hope when they leave home and go to work in a gold mine. Christians should imitate their earnest thoughts and desires, when preparing for Church, and going to it. As what prompts men to work in a gold mine, is the hope and desire to secure enough of that precious metal to provide for their temporal wants and comforts; so, in going to Church for Mass, Christians should hope and desire to secure the gold of God's grace in order to love Him and serve Him in this world, and be happy with Him in the next.

If any one, however, were so unfortunate as to be in state of mortal sin, his thoughts should turn on his own wretched condition before God, his desire should be to hear Mass as an earnest appeal to God for the grace of sorrow for his sins. And his will should be directed to securing God's mercy and pardon through a good confession in the tribunal of Penance, followed by a true conversion from his evil ways.

While present at Mass, Christians should waste no time, but should, like gold miners, use all their

energies to secure the coveted treasures; for the time of Mass is the most propitious for that, provided it be seconded by earnest cooperation. For this, the Christian must summon the service of his mind, heart and will. He must, then, first of all, think and believe that he is before the Altar as an unfaithful steward who has wasted his lord's goods—as a servant who owes his master an enormous debt, which by himself alone, he is unable to pay, and, yet, he is required to pay it in full, or receive a most severe punishment. After being in possession of these wholesome sentiments, the Christian should resolve, and see to the carrying out of his resolutions, to offer to God as much as he can towards paying Him what he owes Him. He should, therefore, honor his Saviour by devoutly saying his morning and night prayers, frequently approaching the Sacraments, hearing the word of God, reading good books, and giving the example of good christian life. He should satisfy God's Justice by sacrificing his predominant passion, breaking himself of some sinful habit, and fleeing from all occasions of sin. He should show himself grateful to God by making good use of the graces .

received, and performing works of charity. He should show his submission to God by seeking His help as light to the mind, fervor to the heart, and determination to the will; and by asking of Him the special grace of direction and protection.

But as the Christian is well aware that, even with his best efforts, he cannot pay God in full; so he should recall to mind the consoling truth that, in the Mass, of which he is a co-offerer with the Priest, Jesus Christ comes to his assistance, and supplies his insufficiency. This point of doctrine is not only consoling, but also a powerful means to impress the Christian that the Sacrifice of the Mass is at one time the renewal of the Sacrifice of the cross, and the medium instituted by Jesus Christ to dispense to men the sanctifying and saving fruits of Redemption.

The Christian will become all the more impressed by this truth, if he will also devote his mind and heart to the consideration of the several sufferings of Jesus Christ, and of His subsequent Mysteries, as are all represented by the different parts of the Mass.

THE CHRISTIAN AT THE CONSECRATION IN THE MASS, AND THE PRIEST'S COMMUNION.

Two of these parts, however, should form the subject of special consideration; they are the *consecration* and *communion*. The Christian should look forward with holy trepidation, and, yet, loving expectation for the solemn moment in which they take place in the Mass; for it is *at the consecration* in the Mass, that Jesus Christ descends on the Altar to renew the offering of Himself which He made once on Calvary to His Heavenly Father, and, thereby, offer anew His most precious Blood to Him to obtain for us mercy and reconciliation. It is through the Priest's *Communion*, that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is consummated; and, in virtue of which, Jesus Christ is pleading with the Father as our infallible advocate, and is longing to become the Guest of our hearts by coming to us through Holy Communion.

We have pointed out the practical manner of hearing Mass. The Christian that adopts it, will, without fail, leave church loaded with spiritual treasures. He, then, is a happy Christian; for he

has joined Jesus Christ in honoring God, in appeasing and satisfying God, in thanking God for past benefits, and in propitiating God's Bounty for new benefits. He is also a fortunate Christian, for from the consideration of the Mysteries of Redemption represented in the Mass, he has drawn powerful motives to spend his life for Jesus Christ, Who has sacrificed His to reconcile him to God, to sanctify and save his soul. That the condition of such a Christian is truly fortunate, nay, happy, is declared by the Priest, when, turning towards the people, he blesses them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This is a blessing that will beget many other blessings here upon earth, and be the pledge for the crowning of all blessings which shall be given on the last day by Jesus Christ when He will say in those most endearing words: "Come, ye blessed . . . , possess you the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."[1]

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[1] St. Matthew, xxv, 34.

APPENDIX.

THE CHRISTIAN AT REQUIEM MASS.

In the preceding Instructions we have considered the allegorical meanings of the principal parts of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, its precious fruits, and the practical manner of assisting at it. One thing more should be considered by us: it is the Mass said in black vestments, called Requiem Mass, or Mass for the dead. Let it then be the subject for this Instruction.

WHY SACRED VESTMENTS OF FIVE DIFFERENT COLORS ARE USED AT THE ALTAR.

Before we enter upon the merits of the Mass for the dead, said in black vestments, we shall consider a few preliminaries of interest. The first thing is to know the reason why sacred vestments of five

different colors are used at the Altar. The answer is that the Priest is directed by the liturgy of the Church in the selection of the color of the vestments he has to use from day to day for the celebration of the Mass. The object of it is to convey to the Priest and to the people the spirit of the Mystery of the Lord to be commemorated, or of the feast of the Saint about to be celebrated at the Altar.

The practice of wearing special garments for the celebration of liturgical rites, seems to be as ancient as Christianity. In fact, from what we gather from the Apocalypse, either St. John has represented eternal glory under the image of Christian assemblies; or the primitive Christians have formed their assemblies on the model described by St. John. In the 1st chapter, 10th verse, he says: "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." And in the 13th verse, he continues, saying: "And in the midst of the seven gold candlesticks, I saw one like to the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt with a golden girdle." And in the IVth chapter, 2nd and 4th verses, he adds: "I saw a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne one sitting. And he that sat, was to the sight like the jasper and the

sardine stone. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats, four and twenty ancients (or priests) sitting, clothed in white garments, and on their heads were crowns of gold." We find here the sacerdotal vestments, namely, the white garments with girdles and crowns.

In the Old Law, God had prescribed the form of vestments for the high priest and the levites; and these vestments are called holy or sacred.[1] He made that provision to inspire respect in the people for the ceremonies of divine worship, and gravity and piety in the priests in their sacred functions. This motive is the same for all times, and commends itself even more in the New Law than in the Old.

It is, then, to be observed, that vestments of *white color* are prescribed on feasts of commemoration of a mystery of our Blessed Lord, to express joy and glory; and, also, on feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Confessors, Virgins, and other Saints not martyrs, to indicate the candor of their innocence and purity. Vestments of *red color* are prescribed for the feast and octave of Pentecost, as a symbol of the tongues of fire, in whose form the Holy Ghost

[1] Exod., xxviii, 4.

descended upon the Apostles. *Red* vestments are also to be used on the feast of the Holy Cross, to express the shedding of Christ's Blood; and on the feasts of the Apostles and of Holy Martyrs, to convey the remembrance of the fire of tribulations, persecutions and excruciating torments endured by them. Vestments of *green* color are prescribed for those days in which there is no special mystery of the Lord to be commemorated, nor feast of a Saint to be celebrated; and are intended to express joy mixed with sorrow. *Purple* vestments are for the days of penance, such as the Sundays and ferial days in Advent, and in Lent, commencing with Septuagesima Sunday; to signify Christian mortification. Finally, *black* vestments are prescribed for the Presanctified Mass on Good Friday, and for Requiem Masses; as reminders of death.

THE NUMBER OF MASSES FOR THE DEAD IN THE MISSAL.

The Missal contains four different Masses for the dead, namely, that called "the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed;" that for the day of death; that of Anniversary, and that of the Daily.

The first Mass of Requiem is for All Souls' day. It is, besides, for deceased Popes, Cardinals and Bishops, not only on the day of their death or funeral, but also on the allotted days within the Month-mind, on it, and on their Anniversary.

The second Mass of Requiem is for any deceased Catholic who had attained the use of reason. It is said on the day of his or her death, or funeral, and, also, on the third and seventh day after burial and on the Month-mind. There is the proviso that on the three last designated days different prayers are to be used. As to the Mass for a deceased Priest, either the first or the second may be selected, but special prayers are to be used.

The third Mass of Requiem, namely the Anniversary, is said on the recurrence of the day in which the yearly date of the person's death takes place, if permitted by the Rubrics.

The fourth Mass of Requiem, namely, the Daily, is that which can be said on any day of the year, that is allowed by the Rubrics; but, generally, with three prayers.

As to whether a Mass for the dead can be said in black vestments, or not; the people have to consult

their Pastor, and remit themselves to his decision, which is grounded on the law of Rubrics.

MERITS OF THE MASS OF REQUIEM.

We shall now pass to consider the special merits of the Mass of Requiem, or of the Mass for the dead in black vestments. As we have already remarked, black vestments are used as reminders of death. Were it not for the Mass for the dead, said in black vestments, the thought of death would be but vague and passing, for so many and influential are our distractions through home-concerns, business-vicissitudes, and social intercourse, that our mind easily turns to this life. But when the Christian is in Church, and sees the Priest clothed in black vestments standing at the Altar to say Mass for the dead, the thought of death fills his whole mind, and evokes the innermost sentiments of his heart. God alone is witness to the great spiritual good that is thereby being done within the soul of the Christian so affected! All that we know is that the Holy Ghost has said: "Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin."[1] How so? Because the thought of

[1] Eccl., VII, 40.

death leads to that of God's terrible judgment, and from it to that of an eternity either of bliss or woe. The Christian that seriously considers these eternal maxims, will not sin; for this consideration destroys pride, kills envy, cures malice, puts lust to flight, annihilates vanity and vainglory, sets up the rule of discipline, perfects sanctity, and prepares the soul to eternal salvation.[1]

MASS FOR ALL SOULS.

While the Christian is immerged in the wholesome thought of death, he notices that the Priest, at the foot of the Altar, recites prayers much shorter than at the Masses said with vestments of another color. What is the reason for that? It is that, through the Priest, the Church, who is a most tender mother, is anxious to lend a speedy help to her children that have departed from this life. In fact, at the Introit of the Mass, instead of blessing himself with the sign of the cross, and reading a Scriptural passage bearing on the Mystery or feast of the day, the Priest makes the sign of the cross over the

[1] See St. Bernard's XIth sermon on St. Peter and St. Paul.

part of the Missal open for present use, as a symbol of salvation, and, contemporaneously, appeals to God's mercies in behalf of the departed, saying: "Grant them eternal rest, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine on them." Then, he recites the following portion of a psalm: "A hymn becometh Thee, O God, in Sion, and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem. O hear my prayer: all flesh shall come to Thee." After this, he repeats the former supplication.

Evidently, this praying for rest to the dead, is not intended for the body; for mother earth grants it its own rest till the last day. Hence, the rest which is thus prayed for the dead, is only intended for the soul. What does this mean, except that, by death, it is only the body that dies, but not the soul? Grounded upon this dogma of the immortality of the soul, the Church hastens to reach the souls of all her departed faithful, which, on account either of venial sins not forgiven, or of guilt not atoned for, need the application of Christ's merits for their admission into the glory of heaven, whereinto "nothing defiled can enter."[1] Wherefore, in the

[1] Wis., VII 25; Apoc., XXI, 27.

Mass on All Souls' day, and also in the Daily Mass for the dead, her prayer is: "O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, give to the souls of Thy servants departed the remission of their sins: that through the help of pious supplications, they may obtain the pardon they have always desired."

The Church does not know which souls are in want, but she knows that many are crying out to her for help. Hence, her solicitude in offering it to them, principally, through Masses of Requiem. She cherishes the sure hope, nay, faith to reach them with the wanted relief. In fact, she manifests this faith through the Epistle and the Gospel, specially set apart for the Mass. In the Epistle, which is the first to the Corinthians, the Apostle says: "I tell you a mystery: we shall all rise again;"[1] and in the Gospel, Christ says: "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live."[2] It is not with the ears of the body, for they are in the grave with it; but with the ears of the soul, that the dead, namely, the departed souls shall hear the voice of their deliverance, which Jesus

[1] xv, 51. [2] St. John, v, 25.

Christ sends forth from the Altar. This certain faith of the Church in the power of the Mass to relieve the souls of the faithful departed, is also manifested through the sequence *Dies iræ*, which is recited in the interval between the Epistle and the Gospel. This sequence is a master-piece of Christian poetry—full of the loftiest sentiments, all carrying the heart to the sublime reality of Christ's infinite merits intended for the redemption of Christian souls. It must be read through with piety to discover its precious worth. Its last stanza reveals the consoling yearnings of the soul, and its founded hope in Jesus Christ; it is this: "O, merciful Lord Jesus: grant them rest. Amen."

THE OFFERTORY.

The Offertory presents another instance of the Church's solicitude to secure for the departed souls the wanted rest, namely, their deliverance from their place of sufferings, and obtain their admission into the eternal joys of heaven. Instead of a verse from a psalm indicative of honor and praise to God, or conveying a petition for the living; the Offertory

in the Mass for the dead is an ardent appeal to Jesus Christ in their behalf. It is partly couched in the following pathos: "Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the flames; . . . and let the standard-bearer, St. Michael, bring them into the holy light, which Thou promisedst of old to Abraham and his posterity. We offer Thee, O Lord, a sacrifice of praise and prayers: accept them in behalf of the souls we commemorate this day: and let them pass from death to life."

THE MASS FOR THE DAY OF DEATH, OR BURIAL.

But great as the charity of the Church is for all the faithful departed, as we have seen; her charity is greater towards the soul just departed. She has a special Mass for the day of the death, or burial of the good Christian. Considering the soul in the act of its departure from the body, the Church has this first prayer for it: "O God, whose property it is always to have mercy and to spare, we humbly present our prayers to Thee in behalf of the soul of Thy servant N, which Thou hast this day called out

of the world: beseeching Thee not to deliver it into the hands of the enemy, nor to forget it forever; but command it to be received by the holy angels, and to be carried into paradise; that, as it believed and hoped in Thee, it may be delivered from the pains of hell, and inherit everlasting life."

The occasion of a Christian's death is always regarded as commanding heartfelt sympathies for the departed soul and for the surviving relatives and friends. None better than the Church knows and appreciates their condition and need; and, therefore, none better than the Church can lend them the proper assistance. Without saying anything of what she does through the Priest in the house of mourning, we know that at the Altar, she offers the sorrows and prayers of the mourners together with the Divine Victim to the merciful God to obtain relief to the lately departed soul, and the spirit of Christian resignation to the sorrowful survivors. Nay, more; while, through the Priest in the Mass, she is all care for the newly departed soul; she takes the liveliest and tenderest interest in those who grieve after it; for she entreats God to infuse into their sorrowful hearts the spirit of faith concern-

ing the dead. She, first, does this through the Epistle, commencing with the endearing appellation: "Brethren."[1] By this Epistle, the Apostle does not forbid every kind of grief over the dead relative or friend, for it is a necessary tribute of nature to grieve over the dead; but he admonishes not to grieve as those who have not the faith. Then, he holds out consolation by saying that the dead relative or friend, is only asleep, and will awake through the power of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

CONSOLATIONS OFFERED TO THOSE WHO GRIEVE OVER A DEAD RELATIVE OR FRIEND.

To make this sentiment of faith more impressive, the Church is urged by the charity of Christ to imitate His conduct with Martha and Mary in behalf of their brother Lazarus. She does this through the Priest at the Altar by the reading or singing of the Gospel of St. John, in which the pathetic episode of Lazarus' resurrection is described as the fruit of his sisters' faith in the divine power of Jesus.[2] It happens now at the Altar as it happened at the two

[1] I Thes., IV, 12-17. [2] XI, 21-28.

mentioned pious ladies' house; as Jesus then and there said to Martha: "Thy brother shall rise again;" and, really, he, shortly after, rose again; so, to those who cause a Mass to be offered for a departed good Christian soul, Jesus says from the Altar: "That soul shall rise from Purgatory." Jesus raised Lazarus to life after Martha had professed her faith in Him, saying: "Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world." Even so; the faith of those who procure a Mass to be said for a departed good Christian soul, will cause Jesus to raise it to the life of glory.

These are the sentiments of faith which sustain the Christian on the occasion that his home has just been visited by death. It is with those sentiments, that he turns the cause of grief into a source of merit to himself, and hastens to give consolation to his saddened heart by acts of warm love for the departed soul of his dead relative or friend. Hence, while the dead body of the beloved member of his family is lying in the house,—and when it is carried out to the funeral, the Christian's thoughts, desires and efforts, are all directed to secure for the departed

soul as much relief as he possibly can. In this, he imitates the earnestness of the faith of the Ruler mentioned in the Gospel, who hastened to go to Jesus and besought Him to restore to life his only daughter that had just died.[1] For, the Christian knows that as Jesus granted the request of the grieved father; so, through the Mass, He grants the request asked of Him by the Priest and him.

But, as the Christian also knows that before raising to life the Ruler's daughter, Jesus ordered the house of mourning to be cleared of the minstrels and the multitude making a rout, because they were unbecoming the place where grace was needed and expected; so the Christian will not permit anything improper in the house where lies dead any member of his family. The Christian knows that among improper things are to be reckoned the use of intoxicating drinks and of flowers. The first speaks loudly for condemnation, as utterly unbecoming the home of sadness from the fresh loss sustained through death. As to the second, namely, the use of flowers in the house and at the funeral of a dead Catholic, it is pagan practice, and, therefore, an

[1] St. Matthew, IX, 18–27.

offence to the Faith, and a mark of perversion of Christian sentiment. Flowers are symbols of joy; hence, their use should be restricted to it, for the relatives and friends of the dead person are not, and cannot be in a mood of joy. On the other hand, the departed soul needs prompt help. This is all the respect that it wants and cares for. Therefore, to be true to the teachings of christian morality, the practice of the Christian on the occasion of death and funeral, is "no strong drinks" and "no flowers." Let us now proceed and consider the two remaining Masses of Requiem, namely, the "Anniversary" and the "Daily."

For the recurrence of the Anniversary from the death of a good Christian, the Church has also a special Mass. Her spirit in the institution of it appears in her first prayer, which is: "O God, the Lord of mercy, give to the soul of Thy servant whose anniversary we commemorate, a place of comfort, a happy rest, and the light of glory."

The Church fully realizes the void made in the family and in the circle of friends by the death of the one they loved. Hence, she invites them to continue to love the departed relative and friend by

doing in his or her name, and for his or her sake, what he or she would do, if permitted to return to this life. From the innate impulse of their hearts, people respond to her invitation,—and, therefore, make their own the supplications of their dear dead relative and friend, and, together with their own supplications, kneeling before the Altar, they offer them up to God with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; that, in consideration of the infinite merits of its Divine Victim, Jesus Christ, the departed soul may find grace with Him. As a manifestation of this founded hope, the Church causes the Priest to read the Epistle,[1] in which it is recorded that Judas Machabee sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem, for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead. From which fact, St. Augustine argues that if, in the Old Law, the sacrifice of sheep was available to departed souls, these must be much more benefited by the Sacrifice of the Body of Christ. The Gospel of St. John for the Anniversary Mass,[2] confirms this hope by setting forth the power of Jesus Christ of saving all that come to Him.

[1] II Mach., XII, 43-46. [2] VI, 37-49.

THE DAILY MASS FOR THE DEAD, IN BLACK VESTMENTS.

But the solicitude of the Church is even more manifest in the institution of the Daily Mass for the Dead, in black vestments. Fully conscious from divine revelation,[1] that bishops and priests are ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that they may offer up gifts and sacrifices for the people and for themselves, for bishops and priests are also compassed with infirmity, and may sin; so the Church requires that the first prayer in the Daily Mass for the Dead, in black vestments, should be for the departed souls of the bishops and priests that may need relief; and that the second prayer should be for the departed soul, or souls, for which the Mass is specially offered; and the third prayer should be for all the faithful departed.

By the institution of the Daily Mass for the Dead, in black vestments, the Church keeps ever present to the mind of the people the necessity of leading a good christian life in order to treasure up good works to follow their soul beyond the grave,

[1] Hebr., v, 1.

and plead for mercy before the judgment seat of God. After having reminded the people of this all important duty through the Epistle; the Church causes the Priest to read or sing the Gospel of St. John,[2] and, by it, she reminds them that the Divine Victim of the Sacrifice of the Mass, Who, through the Consecration, descends on the Altar, is the Bread of life, intended for them as a most efficacious means to persevere in christian life, and do good works worthy of eternal recompense in heaven.

At the same time, the Church desires to impress upon the people that only such souls are in Purgatory, that have departed from this life in state of grace; and that, though they are no longer able to sit at the Eucharistic Table, namely, to partake of the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice by hearing Mass and as a Sacrament by receiving it through Holy Communion; yet, they are, like poor Lazarus, lying at the Church-door, begging of the living to let them, at least, have the crumbs that fall from the Altar, namely, the prayers of the living together with the application of the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Holy Communions offered for them, as

[1] Apoc., XIV, 13; VI, 51–55.

means of relief and gaining the coveted admission into the joys of heaven.

With these considerations in our minds, we can better understand and appreciate the innumerable testimonies of Saints on the precious benefits of the Mass for departed souls. Thus, when dying, and in the presence of friends, St. Monica said to her son, the great St. Augustine: "Put my body anywhere, and be not concerned about it; but I beg thee, remember me at the Altar of the Lord, wheresoever thou mayst be:" a request with which he most religiously complied for thirty years. And, St. Gregory says: "A Mass devoutly heard, relieves the souls of the faithful departed, and remits their sins." And, St. Jerome says: "For every Mass devoutly celebrated, many souls leave Purgatory; and, while the Priest is saying Mass, the souls, for whom the Mass is being said, suffer no pains.

Animated by these consoling sentiments, the Christian cannot but highly value the Mass for the Dead, in black vestments;—avail himself of every opportunity to cause Masses to be offered up for his deceased relatives and friends; and endeavor to often assist at a Requiem Mass, and, thereby, act as

a co-saviour of their souls. Hence, the Christian loves to join the Priest in every part of the Mass; and, "at the Consecration," recommend the departed soul, or souls, to the clemency of Jesus really present,—reiterate his supplications to Him at "the Memento for the Dead,"—say thrice with the Priest "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant them rest—rest everlasting," and, finally, say, with him, the liturgical verse *Requiescant in pace*—"May they rest in peace:" that is, may the soul for which the Mass was specially offered, and may, also, all the souls in Purgatory, for whose general benefit the same Mass was likewise intended, rest in peace. To this desire of true charity, the Christian cannot but give the hearty response—"Amen." This is such a precious response, that it produces a thrill of sweet consolation through his heart, and causes him to imagine that he hears it echoing in heaven as a manifestation of glorious joy from the blessed souls of the departed faithful just delivered from Purgatory, and as an omen of the bliss of comfort and an abundance of other graces to him still living on earth.

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